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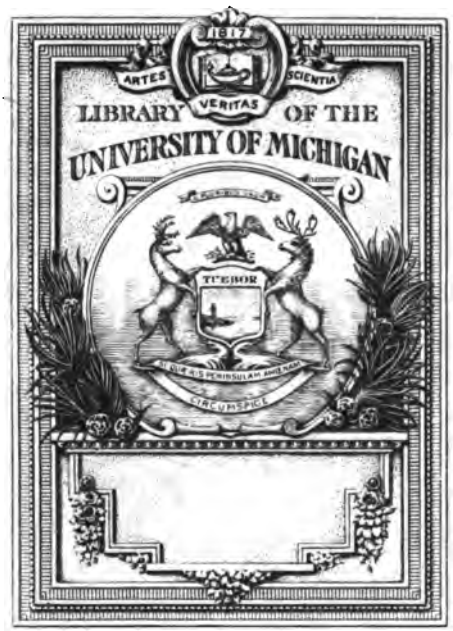
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IN THE PRIMEVAL WOODS

BIRCH LEAVES

Homely Verse for Homely People,
with Homely Virtues and Sentiments

Written from time to time by
"Birch Arnold"
Mrs. ALICE E. BARTLETT

DETROIT, MICH.
THE FRANKLIN PRESS
1905

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FOREWORD

The scientist, the financier, the mechanic deal with mathemetical forces; the artist, the musician and the poet are concerned principally with those mighty, volatile and overwhelming forces which are imprisoned within the word feeling. Without the interpreting voice of musician, poet and artist, life would be mechanical and sordid.

Poetry can not be made; it must be born. It is the heart's painter, and pictures, as nothing else can, the random moods and tenses which we pick out here and there from experience.

It is also the soul's musician, and voices the varying breaths of feeling which sweep over the soul sensitized with the divine harmonies of life. Oftentimes it wears patched garments and "goes lame," but the indwelling spirit speaks despite the clothes it wears. If it voices with a true note of feeling, some cry of the heart, or wreathes the actual with the garlands of hope and cheer, it is poetry, even though it hobbles on one foot, and goes begging in homespun.

To amuse, to interest, to cheer, to voice the universal longings of the human heart for expression these poems have been written. If they strike some chord of sympathy, or evoke some note of harmony in the hearts of the voiceless, this offering of "BIRCH LEAVES" will not have been in vain.

155972

THESE verses are inscribed to the memory of my beautiful Mother, who was my severest critic and warmest admirer. : : : : :

AMONG THE BIRCHES

Oh "ladies of the forest"
  In gowns of silvery white,
Against the shadowed copses
  Agleam like bars of light,
Ye wear the crown of beauty
  The dryads wore of old,
And all the woodland vistas
  With witchery enfold!

Sweet "ladies of the forest,"
  With pastel shades of green
In the laces falling over
  Your gowns of silver sheen,
I follow where ye lead me,
  Bacchante to your spell,
Content in visual glory
  Forever more to dwell!

PART ONE

WITH A BIT OF THE BARK

Old fashioned thoughts in homely guise
These rugged verses mark;
They're just a touch of every day
Clothed in a bit of bark.

WHEN THE SAP BEGINS TU RUN

When the sap begins tu run,
Then's the time o havin' fun,
Fer the 'arth is jes' a laughin'
An' a giglin' all the while,
O'er the way she'll up an' sprize us
Jes' a showin' us her smile;
In the buds an' greenin' grasses,
In the lambs an' lads and lasses,
All a feelin' gay an' frisky,
Half way drunk on Springtime's whiskey
Made o' light an' air an' sun,
When the sap begins tu run.

When the sap begins tu run,
Then's the time o' havin' fun.
Go intu the woods and listen,
Nature's takin' count o' stock
Stirrin' things up mighty lively
Pokin' round each root an' rock.
Tellin' 'em it's time tu hustle
Jes' get up an' make a bustle,
'Stead o' lazin' 'round a dreamin'
'Ith the warmth an' light a beamin'
From a south'ard creepin' sun
When the sap begins tu run.

When the sap begins tu run
Then's the time o' havin' fun.
Down the slantin' driven spiles,
Drops the sap in tinklin' smiles,
'Till the buckets brimmin' o'er
In the copper kettle pour,

BIRCH LEAVES

An' the boys start up the fire,
An' the flames creep higher, higher,
An' the gals in rosy hoods
Come a dancin' down the woods,
Lookin' like the risin' sun
When the sap begins tu run.

When the sap begins tu run
Then's the time o' havin' fun.
Ol' folks mindin' things tu hum,
Young folks raisin' 'Kingdom come'
Laughin', crackin' funny jokes,
Wakin' up the sleepy oaks,
Singin' songs, an' playin' bluff
'Thout a soul tu cry, enough.
My, but it's a purty sight
Mary's arm so plump an' white,
Tryin' ef the boilin's done,
When the sap begins tu run!

When the sap begins tu run
Then's the time o' havin' fun.
Sugarin' off, 'ith lots tu eat
Don't somehow seem half es sweet,
'Less in Mary's eyes I look
Readin' 'em jes' like a book,
'Till she drops her lids an' sighs
In a sort o' sweet surprize,
An' I snatch her hand an' say,
'Mary, you jes' name the day.'
Golly! life hes lots o' fun,
When the sap begins tu run!

THE MAN WHO MAKES US LAUGH

There may be pinnacles of fame,
That tower o'er solid worth;
But his the chance to win a name
Which echoes 'round the earth,
Who sifts the measured weight of grain
To gather up its chaff;
For there's a premium, 'tis plain,
On him who makes us laugh!

The truths of science, nature, art,
We reckon old and dry:
And as for feeling, or for heart,
What matter if they die,
If but the goblet's beaded brim
With him we learn to quaff,
Who sees the fun upon its rim,—
The man who makes us laugh?

Where e'er he goes, success will say
"This man is fortune's own;
He's carved a patent right of way
To her exclusive throne;
The sober minded folk below
Can't equal him by half.
Because they've failed to be, you know
Like him who makes us laugh!"

BIRCH LEAVES

I wish I were the happy man
  Who sees such fun in life;
Who garners all the joy he can
  From turmoil, doubt, and strife;
I wish the world could write for me
  This joyous epitaph
When I shall cross the voiceless sea—
  "Here's one could make us laugh!"

BRACE UP

When the day o' trouble's breakin'
An' sets yer heart a quakin'
  'Till ye all but get tu wishin' ye was everlastin' dead,
Brace up; truth ain't a nappin'.
An' ye'll need yer strength fer runnin'
  An' gitting in ahead;
    Brace up! brace up! an' bear yer yoke,
    An' grin, an' take it like a joke,
          Brace up! I say!

When there aint no light a shinin',
An' lonesomely ye're pinin'
O'er things that didn't happen, or did along the way;
Brace up, an' git tu hoein'.
'Twill pay ye more than blowin'
'Bout trouble all the day;
    Brace up! brace up! the bravest part
    Ain't takin' every thin' tu heart,
          Brace up! I say!

When friends ye love deceive ye
An' go away, an' leave ye
  A wond'rin' how the truth kin let such falsehood be;
Brace up; truth ain't a nappin',
Some day she'll come a slappin'
  A scart hypocrisy;
    Brace up! brace up! an' help tu ketch
    In honor's grip, the faintin' wretch,
          Brace up! I say!

BIRCH LEAVES

I'll tell ye what I'm thinkin',
That justice ain't a blinkin'
  Ez the blind, an' lazy scoundrels like tu feel;
Brace up, fer when she's ready
She'll hit 'em awful steady,
  An' stomp 'em 'neath her heel;
    Brace up! brace up! the pluck tu win
    Don't come unless ye dare begin,
          Brace up! I say!

So keep yer lamps a burnin,'
An' the wheels of life a turnin'
  Tu ketch the many chances a flyin' here below;
Brace up, good luck may nab us,
An' fortune tew may grab us,
  Most any time, ye know;
    Brace up! brace up! before life's clock,
    Has ticked for us its last tick, tock,
          Brace up! I say!

THE SONG OF THE TEA KETTLE

This here world's a lot o' music,
  An' a heap o' singin' tunes,
That's been goin' round creation
  Sence the first o' sunny Junes;
From the bird song up to op'ry,
  (Can't say though that op'ry's best)
Fer thar ain't no other music,
  That has got a note of rest
Like its hummin', hummin', hummin'
  When the kettle sings to me,
"Bubble, bubble, bubble,
Fergit yer care an' trouble
  In a steamin' cup o' tea."

There's my chair beside the chimbly,
  An' the kettle on the hob,
A singin' 'sif the hull creation
  Was dependin' on its job,
An' it knew that men were weary
  An' a needin' lots o' cheer,
As it pipes up loud, an' louder,
  So that every one can hear
"I 'm a singin', singin', singin'
  Jest as merry as can be,
"Bubble, bubble, bubble,
Fergit yer care an' trouble
  In a steamin' cup o' tea."

BIRCH LEAVES

On the t'other side the chimbly,
  Sets my crony, cup in hand,
Jest a drinkin' in the language
  Two fond souls can understand,
An' we listen, listen, listen,
  As the kettle bobs an' sings
Of home, an' love, an' friends and comfort,
  An' lots o 'dear an' common things,
'Till there ain't no other music,
    We solemnly agree,
Like it's "bubble, bubble, bubble,
  In a steamin' cup o' tea."

"MY MA, SHE KNOWS"

My Pa, he scolds me jes' becuz
  He says I'm gittin' "tough;"
He says my face is never clean,
  My hands are always rough;
I'm not behavin' like I should,
An' goin' wrong, I 'spose,
But Ma, she takes an' pats my hand
  An' smiles, becuz she knows!

My Pa haint got no use for boys,
  He wants 'em always men;
I wonder if he's clean forgot
  The boy he must 'a been;
Fer Ma, she says they're all alike
  'Bout face an' hands an' clothes,
An' says I'll learn to be a man
  An' Ma, I guess she knows!

My Pa, he says I ain't no good
  At doin' anything;
I'd ruther fool away the time,
An' whistle, play an' sing;
But Ma, she smiles an' says I'm young
  An' then she up, an' goes
An' kisses me, an' shows me how;
  For Ma, you bet she knows!

BIRCH LEAVES

My Pa, he says I'll never be
A business man like him,
Becuz I hain't got any "drive"
An' "get up," "pluck" an' "vim;"
But Ma she says so solemn like
A man's a boy that grows,
An' boys must have their playin' spell,
An' Ma's a trump, an' knows!

My Pa, he shakes his head an' sighs
An' says he doesn't see
Where I get all the careless ways
That seem jes' born in me;
An' Ma, she laughs, an' laughs, an' laughs,
'Till Pa's face crimson grows,
An' then she says, " 'Tis very queer,"
But somehow, Ma, she knows!

My Ma, she knows most everything
'Bout boys, an' what they like;
She's never scolding 'bout the muss
I make with kites, an' bike;
She says she wishes I'd be good,
An' conquer all my foes,
An' you jes' bet I'm goin' to be,
'Cuz my sweet Ma, she knows!

I'SE SO GLAD I'SE LIVIN', HONEY

I'se so glad I'se livin' honey,
  Jes' to ketch yo' tendah smile,
W'en I comes in tru de do' way
  Aftah I'se been gone erwhile;
All de trubble an' de darkness,
  Seems ter vanish w'en I see
Jes' de way yo's smilin' honey,
  Smilin' up so sweet at me!

I's so glad I's livin' honey!
  Often in de cotton fiel's,
W'en I'se sweatin' lak er butchah,
  Sech er comfort o'er me steals,
Case I'se wukin', wukin' honey,
  All fer yo', an' all fer love—
Talk erbout yer Heaven, honey
  Haint none lak hit up erbove!

I'se so glad I'se livin' honey,
  Yo's all de worl' I'se got,
'S long's I'se got yo' go way trubble
  It caint tech dis blessed spot;
'Specs if I should be an angel
  'Way up yondah, missin' yo',
I'd go say ter ol' Saint Peter,
  Dis ain't Heaven, lemme tru!

A SINGIN' TU THE BABY

Yew couldn't see a purtier sight!
  An' yet she's jest a woman,
A showin' she has got a heart
  That's mighty warm an' human,
Fer the tiny head agin' her breast,
  As back an' forth she's swingin'
The rockin' chair, an' them ol' hymns
  Is sof'ly, sweetly singin':
I set an' watch her by the hour,
  Or less, perhaps it may be,
My Sally, lookin' like a flower,
  An' singin' tu our baby!

It ain't so many years ago
  We walked the lanes together,
A boy an' gal a singin' songs,
  With hearts jes' like a feather.
I thought her then the purtiest gal
  That ever wore a bunnit,
An' when I growed to be a man,
  I'd staked my life upon it;
But now I know I didn't know
  What beauty is, or may be,
When Sally with her face aglow,
  Is singin' tu our baby!

by BIRCH ARNOLD

That downy head agin her breast
  Jest sets my heart a beatin'
With wonderin' if Heaven's got
  A joy that's more completin';
An' if there's ary kind of saint,
  That is somehow or ruther
A sweeter thing in God's own sight
  Then jest a lovin' mother:
An' then I bend above her chair,
  An' know there ain't, nor may be,
A purtier sight than Sally there
  A singin' tu our baby!

MAMMY'S LULLABY

Oh whoo! oh whoo! de night owl hoots,
  Yander in de co'n,
Oowee! oowee! mah honey! mah honey!
  De debbil knows yo's bo'n;
  He's waitin' in de whisp'rin' co'n,
    Twel dark to get a peep,
At pickanninny 'twont be good
      An' rock hisse'f to sleep!

Lay yo' haid on de pillow dere,
  Loo Lee mammy's own,
De good Lawd keeps you in his care,
  De debbil min's his own!

Oh whoo! oh whoo! in de 'simmon tree,
  He's comin', shet yo' eyes,
Oowee, oowee, mah honey! mah honey!
  De debbil's monstrous wise;
An' ef yo' lays a blinkin' dere,
  He'll get yo' sho's sin,
I'll drop de latch an' call "oowee"!
  An' he'll come humpin' in!

Lay yo' haid on de pillow dere,
  Loo Lee mammy's own,
De good Lawd keeps yo' in his care
  De debbil min's his own!

by BIRCH ARNOLD

Oh whoo! oh whoo! beside de well
I hear him potterin' 'roun,
Oowee! oowee! mah honey! mah honey!
Yo' bettah scramble down,
An' shet yo' eyes tight's yo' kin,
Else his ol' niggah face,
'Ll come a scrabblin' tru de do'
An' snatch yo' frum yo' place!

Lay yo' haid on de pillow dere,
Loo Lee mammy's own!
De good Lawd keeps yo' in his care
De debbil min's his own!

Oh whoo! oh whoo! he's goin' off,
He's taken jes' a peep
Oowee! oowee! mah honey! mah honey!
An' foun' yo' fas' asleep.
He's madder'n tophet case I tol'
Dat he's a snoopin' 'roun';
But I ain' gwine let him ketch
De fines' babe in town!

Sleepin' sof' on de pillow dere
Loo Lee mammy's own,
De good Lawd keeps yo' in his care,
De debbil min's his own!

WHERE'S A FELLER GOIN' TO GO?

Oh, it's don't go in the parlor,
'Cause Edith's feller's there;
And it's don't go in the lib'ry
Fer Mary'll pull your hair;
And it's don't go in the kitchen—
The policeman's there, you know,
And Bridget gets so angry—
And where's a boy to go?

When a feller's got two sisters,
And the servant girl's in love,
Most any place'll answer
A lonesome boy to shove;
And dad he scolds me awful,
And says my company's low;
But when everybody's courtin'
Where can a feller go?

The girls they think I'm awful,
'Cause I like Tom and Dick,
And so they call me "Gummy"
'Cause I am bound to stick;
And say at hints and nudges,
I'm everlastin' slow—
So nights I'm playin' hookey—
Fer where's a boy to go?

by BIRCH ARNOLD

My mother's awful busy,
A sewin' fer the girls,
And hain't got time to bother
With a fellers kinks and quirls;
And dad he goes to lodges,
And I ain't no one's beau,
So I'm hangin' 'round the corners—
Fer where's a boy to go?

When I get big, I bet you,
And have a boy like me,
He won't go huntin' places,
He's got a right to be;
Fer I'll build him just a dandy
Big sittin' room, you know;
So's he won't be always askin'
Where's a feller goin' to go?

WHEN YOUR HAIR IS THIN ON TOP

There are some awful sorrows,
  That cut the very quick,
And they seldom venture singly
  But others follow thick;
Yet scarce another sorrow
  Can make your courage drop,
Like the cruel one of finding
  Your
    Hair
      Is
        Thin
          On
            Top!

You can wear a dingy collar,
  Or coat that isn't whole,
And know they simply cover
  A brave, determined soul.
But a thought to make you falter
  Is the one you cannot stop
You're getting old and seedy—
  When
    Hair
      Is
        Thin
          On
            Top!

by BIRCH ARNOLD

You say it may be wisdom,
And tell your grinning friends,
How over study always,
A look of ripeness lends;
And yet in tearful secret
You scout the flimsy prop,
And ruefully admit it,
Your
Hair
Is
Thin
On
Top!

You brush in vain to hide it,
And buy the latest dye,
And every sort of tonic
With patient hand you try;
But still the faithful mirror,
As an anxious face you mop,
Repeats, there's no denying
Your
Hair
Is
Thin
On
Top!

Ah me! no other sorrow,
In anguish's bitter train,
Is so inclined to mock you
With hopes and fancies vain,
As is the one of finding

BIRCH LEAVES

A thing you cannot stop;
This growth of years upon you
When
Hair
Is
Thin
On
Top!

WHEN THE DOLLARS JINGLE

When I hear the dollars jingle,
  Don't care what the weather's like;
Hain't a mindin' if creation
  Goes off on a labor strike;
Fer their clink an' clink an' jingle
  Say I've got the best of friends,
While empty pockets soon'll show you
  Jest where so-called friendship ends.

When I hear the dollars jingle,
  I can wear a cheerful smile;
Feelin' sech an independence,
  Even tho' I hain't no style;
Fer their clink an' clink an' jingle
  Hes a way of tellin' you
Folks won't mind yer little failin's
  Long's the dollars' clink is true.

When I hear the dollars jingle,
  Life's a reg'lar funny joke;
I can heft most any burden,—
  Fit my neck to any yoke;
Fer their clink an' clink an' jingle
  Plays the merriest kind of air,
'Sif they knew they're jest a cure-all
  Fer sech things as ol' despair!

BIRCH LEAVES

When I hear the dollars jingle.
  All the world is kind to me;
Tho' some folks is lookin' crosswise,
  I ain't time their scowls to see;
Fer their clink an' clink an' jingle
  Is the thing that makes me know
The golden calf is what we worship
  Big an' little, here below!

SHAKE YO' TOE, MA HONEY

Go shake yo' toe, mah honey,
  I'se watchin' by de do'
I neber seed a finer foot
  In all my life befo';
It's straighter dan de broomstick,
  An', oh, dat yaller heel
Is floatin' 'roun' yo' ankle
  Like co'n silk in de fiel'!

Hippem! hippem! hi!
Shake yo' toe an' fly!
Jig yo' eas' an' jig yo' wes'
An' jig to one yo' lub de bes'!

Now, lif' yo' gown, mah honey,
  An' kick high's yo' kin,
Dem lil' laigs is growin' stiff
  Fer sumfin' limberin'.
An' scrape de fiddle, Epherman,
  So's we kin see
De pickaninny's whirlumgigs
  Dat's jes' a-comin' three!

Hippem! hippem! hi!
My but she kin fly!
Jig it, jig it, see her go!
Sca'cely techin' on de flo'!

BIRCH LEAVES

Oh, shake dat toe, mah money,
  An' cut de piging wing,
An' bulge yo' eyes, yo' niggahs—
  Don't dat beat ebery'ting?
I 'clare to gracious, honey,
  You's boun' to crambulate
To de bery do' ob fortin
  An' make yo' mammy great!

Hippem! hippem! hi!
Glory bye an' bye!
Hallelujah, see dem flings!
Honey's laigs is growin' wings!

"KEEP A STIFF UPPER LIP"

There's a bit of homely wisdom
  Floating 'round this busy world
For the weak and sad and helpless
  Who, alas! are often hurled
'Gainst the rocks of old Misfortune,
  Off the cape of dark Despair,
When they fail to gain a foothold
  On the highway anywhere;
And it loves to come and tell them,
  As it sees them slide and slip,
"The man who does the winning
  Keeps a good stiff upper lip!"

Ah! it seem a little matter
  To the man on solid ground
That your legs are knocking under
  And your hands are simply bound
By the cruel gyves of weakness,
  Wrapped around your quivering frame;
Though you're working tooth and talons
  To "get there" all the same,
He'll often kindly tell you
  That you "mustn't lose your grip,
But must sally forth to battle
  With a good stiff upper lip!"

There is value in the saying
  And there's value in the fact,
And there's many times its value
  In just the simple act;
But I often stop to wonder
  When I hear it glibly said,

BIRCH LEAVES

How much there is in knowing
  You have easy paths to tread,
And can hold the hand of fortune
  And need not fear her whip,
While you sing and dance beside her
  "With a good stiff upper lip!"

And oft I wonder further,
  In behalf of him who's down,
As he watches through the darkness
  For some cherished good to crown
The effort he is making,
  In the silence and the night,
If, standing in the doorway
  In a blaze of welcome light,
He should chance to see the preachers
  Who give this brilliant "tip"
Holding out their hands to help him
  "Keep a good stiff upper lip."

But e'en through all its phases
  That mock our load of care,
This homely bit of wisdom
  Is a tonic to despair;
And we need to take it humbly
  As we wander to and fro,
For the God-man made it holy
  On the cross of long ago;
And though we drink the wormwood
  And life's pleasures seldom sip,
We must still toil on, my brothers,
  "With a good stiff upper lip!"

WHEN THE PARSON COMES TO TEA

They've got a bran' new parson,
  Since conference, come to town,
And they say he isn't married,
  And they say his name is Brown,
And mam has gone to scrubbin',
  And sis is taffyin' me,
And dad is studyin' scripter,
  'Fore the parson comes to tea.

You'd think we lived like heathen
  The way the soap and sand
Is polishin' up the chair seats
  And makin' things look grand.
You'd swear that sis's an angel
  If you could only see
The way she smiles and twitters
  'Fore the parson comes to tea.

The butt'ry's full of gimcracks,
  We're livin' tho' on bread,
An' when I steal a cookie
  I get whacked upon the head,
For mam is mighty savin',
  An' she often says to me:
"Just wait, my little sonny,
  'Till the parson comes to tea."

Sis wears her hair in papers,
  And she's got a bran' new gown,
An' I'll bet you she's expectin'
  To capture Mr. Brown.
Fer she's sayin' prunes an' prisms
  As perlite as she can be,
So she won't be makin' blunders
  When the parson comes to tea.

I see her lookin' sideways
  At "sonny" now and then,
An' she an' mam were sayin'
  "Some boys are little men;"
An' I know they're growin' anxious
  'Bout what they'll do with me,
Fer "sonny" isn't in it
  When the parson comes to tea.

An' dad'll fix the woodpile
  When the supper table's set,
An' send me out to whack it
  With the dull old ax, you bet;
An' Sis'll be triumphant
  Because the way is free
To show her airs and graces,
  When the parson comes to tea.

But there's a satisfaction—
  The parson ain't a whale,
An' can't eat all the fixin's
  In the butt'ry, I'll go bail;
An' when they've left the table
  I reckon there will be
A fillin' up of "sonny,"
  When the parson comes to tea.

by BIRCH ARNOLD

An' Sis an' I'll get even—
  I'll tell her so tonight—
If she doesn't want the parson
  To get a sudden fright,
An' skip her bloomin' halter,
  She'd better trv to be
Most awful good to "sonny",
  When the parson comes to tea.

MAH LIL' SUNSHINE GAL

Lak a yallah bird a flittin'
F'um de treetop to de fence
Perkin' up 'is haid an' whistlin'
Chunes dat ain't got common sense,
Case he's jes' a bit ob sunshine
Wid a froat an' nuffin 'mo',
Dar's mah Sunshine Gal a singin'
Out dar by de cabin do'!

Pears lak trouble nebber tech huh,
Haid's so full ob joke an' fun;
Lawdy! how she sets me laughin'
'Twell mah wuk ain't neber done!
Ain't no mattah 'bout de weddah,
Ef it's bright, or ef it's gray,
She's a streak ob sunshine shinin'
Jes' huh brightes' all de day!

Dat's huh whistle, heah it pipin'
Dem dar cake walk dancin' chunes,
Lak huh ha'ht wah made ob music
Mixed up wid a lot o' Junes
Jes' a bustin' out wid brightness
Dat de Lawd had planted dar,
"'Sif he said, 'Mah lil' Sunshine
Chase dem shadders ebery whar?"

Eben w'en ol' hoodoo, sickness,
Hush de laugh, an' still de song,
She jes' smile an' say: 'Don' bodder
Dis ol' trouble won' stay long;

by BIRCH ARNOLD

Sun's a shinin' on de treetops,
  He'll jes' come a sweepin' down
Mighty soon, an' ketch de da'kness
  Snoopin' down heah on de groun'!"

How I lub's mah lil' Sunshine
  Wid huh perky kitten plays,
Ticklin' me to heah me hollah,
  'Go long wid yo' sassv ways!
'Aint yo' got no sense I wondah?"
  Den huh ahms creep 'roun' mah neck,
W'ile she laughs an' says: "I bettah
  Jes' go out an' buy a peck!"

"CHEER UP, CHEER UP"

Listen honey! Hear dat robin
  Singin' lak his lil' throat
Boun' ter split wid all his music
  Hangin' 'roun' dat scrumptious note?
"Cheer up, cheer up, quit yo' weepin',"
  Robins know a ting or two,
'Pears lak he was guessin' honey,
  Jes' de word ter sing fer you.

Listen honey! W'hat I tell yo'—
  Clouds dey come, an' clouds dey go.
Dat dar perky lil' robin
  Hes ter feel de norf win' blow,
Yet he's singin' lak de mischuf,
  In de ' simmon tree out dar,
"Cheer up, cheer up! Hain't no 'quaintance
  Wid yo' hoodoo, ol' despair!"

Listen honey doan yo' reckon
  Yo' is God's own lil' chile?
Doan yo' 'spose He'll fotch de sunshine
  W'en yo's had de storm awhile?
Cain't yo' lif' yo' heart a singin'
  Lak dat robin in de tree;
"Cheer up, cheer up! God is watchin',
  Watchin' ober yo' and me!"

WHEN YE'RE GOIN' DOWN THE HILL

There's a lot of fust rate problems
  In life's old 'rithmetic,
That when ye're young an' hopeful,
  Don't seem too hard, or thick
Fer yer head tu dare tu tackle,
  Or tu bluff yer heart, or will;
But they're quite a diff'runt matter
  When ye're goin' down the hill!

When ye're climbin' up the mountin'
  There's many a restin' place,
Fer tu stop when ye git winded,
  Or hev a cross to face;
But the hobby horse ye're ridin'
  Gits tu buckin' fit to kill,
When there ain't no way o' stoppin'
  As ye're goin' down the hill!

When it's arly in the mornin',
  An' yer eyes is clear an' bright,
It don't matter ef it's cloudy,
  An' the sun is out o' sight;
Ye kin hope 'twill shine tomorrer,
  As ye tread the daily mill,
But ye know 'twill soon be sunset,
  When ye're goin' down the hill!

BIRCH LEAVES

The wind is cold an' shiv'ry,
  An' the shadders dark' an' long,—
  Ye wish ye could be youthful
  Once more, an' big, an' strong,
So's tu solve the puzzlin' problems
  That hang aroun' ye still;
But ye find yer strength is failin'
  When ye're goin' down the hill!

Yet the valley's calm an' peaceful,
  An' the problems cease tu be,
When once ye' reach the bottom
  An' cross the jasper sea;
An' yer empty cup o' sorrer,
  There is joy enough tu fill,
Ter pay fer all yer trouble
  When ye're goin' down the hill!

IN HAYING TIME

I am livin' in the city with my daughter, Sally Ann,
Her house's a modern palace on the very latest plan,
For what with lights electrical, an' window glass of plate,
An' bells to call a servant maid on every want to wait,
An' polished floors so awful smooth, you're careful how you walk,
An' telephone to call you up when someone wants to talk,
Fancy orchids in the greenhouse, an' naked marbles in the hall,
There ain' a thing that money'll buy, but Sally's got 'em all!
An' she's most awful good to me, an' dresses me up fine,
An' gives the folks to understand that I am first in line.
But somehow 'taint the happiest life this world can give to me,
Because I wasn't made for show an' often long to be
The same old pioneer that chopped the wild and rugged way,
For meadow land that's dotted now with fragrant cocks o' hay!
There's a ne'er forgotten picture that is always in my eyes,
As if it lay there ready painted on the narrow strip of skies
I can see from Sally's windows, an' I often list to hear
The old farm bell a ringin' out it's welcome note o' cheer,
As it called us in to supper, when the shadows long and fine,
Made the haycocks into pyramids along the meadow line!
How the horses sniffed an' snorted when they heard the supper bell!
An' started for the barnyard in a coltish playin' spell,
Like they knew the oats were waiting, an' the supper steamin' hot,
"Ma" had piled upon the table was the thing to touch the spot!
I can see her standin' smilin' by the supper table there,

BIRCH LEAVES

Her apron white an' spotless, not a crinkle in her hair.
Oh, the picture, how it haunts me all the long and lonesome day
When we used to dot the meadow land with fragrant cocks o' hay!

How the pinies blushed in beauty out there in the garden bed,
While the phlox that grew beside 'em an' the cinnamon roses red
Spiced the air with waves o' sweetness blown across the meadow land,
When we gathered 'round the table such a laughing jesting band!
What a supper! Bet a fifty, Sally's "chef" they rave about
Never cooked a thing to equal all the fixin's "ma" set out;
Baked potatoes white an' feath'ry goin' with a chicken fry;
Apple sass and luscious berries, cream an' cookies, cheese an' pie.
An' the cookin'! Land o' Goshen! "Ma" was famous miles around,
Lots o' neighbors used to tell me such another wasn't found!
When we joked about the fodder, askin' her to name her price,
She'd go dishin' out the short cake in a big an' gen'rous slice,
An' say, she'd "sock it to us heavy," when she got her regular pay,
An' the old red barns was bustin' with the mows o' fragrant hay!

Tears? I know it. Sally's coming? She'll be sure to hunt me up,
Askin' if there's any pleasure she can pour in my old cup.
Oh, to tell her just to give me back those happy days again
When I labored poor, but plucky, like a very slave of men!

by BIRCH ARNOLD

Oh, to see the sun a creepin' over Ogden's woods at dawn,
See his robe of gold an' crimson in the west when day is gone.
Hear the night owl hoot an' holler out there in the shadowed copse,
See the chickens scoot to cover underneath the poles of hops.
Hear across the dusky pastures Daisy's cowbell tinklin' shrill,
While the stars come out to westward over there on Malvern's Hill.
When the chores have all been finished, see her face within the door
Watching me with smiles that beckon now beyond the further shore;
Drink again the tender music of mem'ry's words I hear her say,
"Let me move the old red rocker where you'll smell the new mown hay!"

NOVEMBER

After Hood

No leaves upon the naked trees,
No softness in the wandering breeze,
No song of birds, no blush of flowers,
No happy dreams in sunny hours,
No summer joys, to balance ills,
No cash with which to pay one's bills,
No politician's sugary smile,
No promises, so free erstwhile,
No chance for "pull," election's o'er,
No "pap" to heal a heart that's sore,
No hope of "jobs" with winter here,
No overcoat, no fire to cheer,
No happiness, but to remember,
No gold, no sun, no hope, November!

Main

BY THE ROADSIDE

PART TWO

A SUMMER'S LEAF

In changing fashion here are writ
A word of joy, perchance of grief;
On fancy's thread they're lightly strung
And fastened with a summer's leaf.

BY ROCKAWAY RIVER

By Rockaway River in Lullaby Town,
The wonderful sleep flowers grow;
They are blossoming there o'er buds of down
With petals as white as snow.
The petals are lids of Babykin's eyes
With fringes of curling black,
And sweetly they bloom when the Sleep king flies
Over the sunset's track.

Then rockaway, rockaway, baby mine!
To Lullaby Town we'll go,
To watch for the stars that twinkle and shine,
And see the sleep flowers grow!

By Rockaway River in County Dream,
Most wonderful visions arise,
Out of the beautiful Ocean of Seem,
To dazzle the watching eyes.
They lead the way to the Hills of Rest,
And Babykin follows on
'Till darkness flees from the silver west
And the twinkling stars are gone.

Then rockaway, rockaway, baby blest!
To County Dream we'll fly,
And sweetly sleep on the Hills of Rest
And watch the dreams go by!

BIRCH LEAVES

By Rockaway River in Bedlow state
  In the country of Somnolent,
Babykin lads and lassies wait
  For gifts by the Sleep king sent;
Bright eyes of blue, and brown and gray,
  And dimpled cheeks of red,
Beautiful smiles and laughter gay,
Are sent by him, 'tis said.

So rockaway, rockaway, baby mine!
  To Bedlow state we'll go,
To welcome the Sleep king's gifts divine,
  And wake with the east aglow!

AROUND THE MAY-POLE

The May-day air is balmy,
The skv is wondrous blue,
And little feet are weaving
A braid of varied hue,
As ribbons meet and mingle
At music's rhythmic swing,
Beneath the flower-decked Maypole
Where happy children sing.

Laugh now, dance now,
Gaily all the day;
Bird song, bee song,
Join the roundelay;
For life is but a poem
This merry, merry May!

The lilting music trembles
With breath of ecstacy;
The children trip to meet it,
A living symphony
Of color, form and motion,
In flowing gown and hair,
And peals of gurgling laughter
Across the quivering air.

Oh, dance now, trip now,
Light as feather down;
Fly feet, skip feet,
Golden heads and brown,
All around the Maypole,
The Queen of May to crown!

BIRCH LEAVES

Oh, Heaven bends above them,
With gold and sapphire set;
Perhaps the baby angels
Lean o'er its parapet
And clap their hands with pleasure
To note how every tone
Of children's happy laughter
Is music 'round the throne.

Then laugh now, sing now,
Chase away the tear;
High note, sweet note,
Make it loud and clear;
Children's happy voices
Bring sweet Heaven near!

THAT AWFUL NOISY BOY

There's a rattle on the stairway,
  There's drumming on the door,
There's a tramp like armed thousands
  Along the kitchen floor,
There's a shrill and piercing whistle,
  And expostulations drown
In a double shuffle juba
  By the noisiest boy in town!

For 'tis rattle
And 'tis battle
Twixt the silence and the boy,
And 'tis banging
And 'tis clanging,
  With overwhelming joy,
And 'tis, oh, to be as happy
  As that awful noisy boy!

It is "pugging" over marbles,
  In a wild and whooping chase,
As they bang against the doorway
  And scratch the polished base;
'Tis sending tops a whirring
  To dent the kitchen floor,
And drumming with the poker
  "McGinty o'er and o'er."

BIRCH LEAVES

For 'tis rattle
And 'tis battle,
'Twixt the silence and the boy,
And 'tis banging
And 'tis clanging,
With overwhelming joy.
And 'tis, oh, to stop the clangor
Of that awful noisy boy!

You can always tell 'tis morning
The way the rafters shake,
With the rat-a-tat and tumble
Of the boy that's just awake;
You can hear him half the distance
I fancy, toward the moon,
When his shrill and piercing whistle
Is tackling some old tune.

For 'tis rattle
And 'tis battle
'Twixt the silence and the boy,
And 'tis clanging
And 'tis banging,
With overwhelming joy.
And I shall soon go crazy
With that awful noisy boy!

Yet I tremble lest the silence,
Having now so little chance,
Shall some time come a-weaving
Its awful, lonely trance,
And leave me ever listening
For dancing steps to drown
The bitter sweet of longing
For the noisiest boy in town.

by BIRCH ARNOLD

Though 'tis rattle
And 'tis battle,
'Twixt the silence and the boy,
Though 'tis banging
And 'tis clanging,
With overwhelming joy,
Just let me always keep him,
That awful noisy boy!

THE LAND OF MAKE BELIEVE

Come cuddle your head on my bosom, dear,
And the swing of the rocking chair
Shall take us away, from the prose of the day,
To a land that is wondrous fair.
We'll go to the land of Make Believe
Across by the path of Dreams,
Where glories rise, to the sun-kissed skies,
And nothing is, but seems.

Oh, a wonderful land is Make Believe,
With its capital city, Bliss.
Reared by the art of the longing heart,
For a throne, a crown or a kiss!
'Tis a glorious ride by the path of Dreams
To the land of Make Believe.
By the cave Regret, o'er the hills Forget,
And the lone, white city, Grieve.

Its bridges of thought are light as air,
And lighter the feet that cross,
To wander there from the city of Care,
In the desolate land of Loss.
The paths of light that thread it through
Are made of the cobwebs fine
That fancy weaves from her golden sheaves,
Or a rainbow's radiant line.

by BIRCH ARNOLD

An answered wish is on every tree,
And every wind that blows
Bears on its wings the very things
The heart's entreaty knows.
You can't imagine a thing my dear,
When once in the magical land,
But quicker than light traverses night,
It flies to your eager hand.

There are dancing dollies for you, my dear,
That vision hath never seen
They laugh and jest with exuberant zest,
And walk like a stage-struck queen.
Their gossamer robes of filmy lace,
Untouched by hand or loom,
And the woven gleams of angels' dreams,
And the ether's azure bloom.

For the older folks that travel there
Is many a happy stage.
The fount of Youth, by the well of Truth,
And the buried specter, Age.
The beautiful things of earth and life,
And Memory's glowing gems,
In profusion sweet, lie at their feet,
Or glitter in diadems.

The love they lost in the city of Care,
The kisses that vanished away,
On the battle plain, of the land of Pain
When life was cold and gray;
The riches that took such sudden wings,
The grave that snatched their all.
The power and fame they used to claim
Before misfortune's fall.

BIRCH LEAVES

Are gathered here in this radiant land,
Forever theirs alone,
And none can say a somber "Nay"
To treasures they call their own.
They are king and queen in Make Believe,
They've but to will to be,
And the sad old earth has a roseate birth
In the heart of their ecstasy.

Though you and I are sorrowful, dear,
When days are dark and cold,
Let's wander there, from the city of Care,
And look for the fairies' gold;
We'll away, away by the path of Dreams,
And the lone, white city, Grieve.
By the cave Regret, o'er the hills Forget,
To the land of Make Believe,

THE WHITE BRIGADE

Let them prate about the bravery
  Of blue coats, or of gray,
And the glory hovering o'er him
  Who's foremost in the fray;
There's none among the nations,
  Tho' Cossack, Briton, Hun,
Chattanooga's famous hero,
  Or Austerlitz well won.
Who can equal me in grandeur,
  Or boast the rare delight,
That is mine when through the sunset
  The purple clouds of night
Drop down upon the gloaming,
  A veil of deep'ning shade,
And I hear the footsteps patter,
  Of my merry white brigade.

For I'm the greatest general
  In all this land of fame—
I'm not so very noted,
  And don't boast a wondrous name—
But I'll venture half my fortune,
  Which is not so very large,
That in all the famous battles
  There was never such a charge
As we make upon the pillows,
  When the tricksy Sprite of Sleep
With the curved and silken lashes
  Of my soldiers plays bo-peep!

BIRCH LEAVES

They're not so great in numbers,
  Nor so very great in power,
But they're worth a hundred millions,
  Or a royal princess' dower,
And I often start in terror,
  As my heart grows half afraid,
That I shall sometime lose them—
  My lovely white brigade!

How they charge upon the stairway,
  In their long and snow-white coats,
While clear upon the zephyrs
  Their merry laughter floats,
And they scarce obey my orders,
  As I give them here and there,
With the most austere of voices,
  That is lost upon the air.

Their "arms" are white and dimpled,
  Their bayonet a kiss.
And they often turn upon me
  And stab me with its bliss.
They rumple up my collar,
  My hair they tumble down,
Regardless of my protests,
  Unmindful of my frown.
And though so brave a general,
  I'm sometimes half afraid,
I've a lawless lot of soldiers
  In this little white brigade!

How many of them are there?
  I suppose there are but two,
But I sometimes think a hundred
  Have been loosed to dare and do;

by BIRCH ARNOLD

For in the eyes of Donald,
My loving little man,
Lives the veriest imp of mischief
That ever led a van;
And the laughter loving dimples
Of my wise and winsome Fay,
Reflects him as a mirror
Reflects the light of day.

Ah me! the tears are falling;
The years will slip away,
And Donald, still a soldier,
Will be borne into the fray
And Fay a woman's portion—
To work and wait and weep—
Will find her sweetest treasures
No longer hers to keep,
While I shall then be sitting
In the lonely evening shade,
To long with bitter longing
For my little white brigade!

YANKEE DOODLE

Yankee Doodle! Down the street
  The band comes tripping fine, sir.
The leader's cheeks are red as fire,
  His eyes with glee ashine, sir.
He wears a cap of paper gilt,
  His tunic is of blue, sir,
You cannot find a man of five
  With eyes that are as true, sir!

Yankee doodle, doodle, doo,
  Yankee doodle, dandy:
I lift my skirts and trip it, too,
  In any step comes handy.

Yankee Doodle plays the horn,
  And, my! he makes it ring, sir!
The very dogs espouse his cause
  And set themselves to sing, sir!
The drum is beaten on behind
  All by a man of three sir,
Ah! Many a league you'll go to find
  A finer man than he, sir!

Yankee doodle, doodle, doo,
  Yankee doodle, dandy—
Bring your pocket-books to view
  And get your pennies handy!

by BIRCH ARNOLD

Miss Yellow Hair supports the flag
  In rather shaky way, sir,
But you'll forget it when you see
  Her smiles and dimples play, sir!
Your heart will match the beaten drum
  And throb a pit-a-pat, sir,
And then 'twill jump right out your breast
  And at her feet lie flat, sir.

Yankee doodle, doodle, doo,
  Yankee doodle, dandy!
Her heart and smiles and dimples, too
  Are won by sticks o' candy!

Yankee Doodle! What a band
  Of beauty, brawn and brain, sir!
I long to go again to war
  And lead the valorous train, sir.
Such bravery as they display
  Such music as they make, sir,
Would make old age forget his stick
  And give his toe a shake, sir!

Yankee doodle, doodle, doo,
  Yankee doodle, dandy!
Forget your age and trip it, too,
  With anything comes handy!

PINNY, PINNY, POPPY SHOW

"Pinny, pinny, poppy show!
Give me a pin and I'll let you know."
Two bright eyes upturned to mine
With eagerness of bargain shine;
Two dimpled hands the secret hide
By rose-red lips so loudly cried;
The heavy price I quickly pay
And gaze upon the queer array.

"Pinny, pinny, poppy show!"
The little maid is all aglow
With happiness, as fast she hies
About the room to show her prize.
While I with eagerness made bold
Her fairy form restrain and hold;
I clasp her close and feel my heart
With youthful fancies newly start.

"Pinny pinny, poppy show—
I love, I love, I love you so!"
My eager thought goes out to meet
Her lisping jingle, doubly sweet.
Because a winsome woman's grace
Is stamped upon her childish face,
And memory brings the long ago
And hides it in the poppy show.

by BIRCH ARNOLD

"Pinny, pinny, poppy show,
Give me a kiss and I'll let you go!"
I say the jingle, thrilled anew
With tender eyes, lost eyes of blue;
She struggles, yields and pays the price,
The while she lisps with instinct nice,
"No gentleman would want to know
At such a price my poppy show!"

"FOR I LOVE YOU"

"Eenie-meenie-cockle-show,
You-are-first-and-out-you-go;
Rimmer-zimmer-red-and-blue,
You-stay-in-for-I-love-you."

A tiny maid with flying hair,
Sparkling eyes and skirts a flare,
Says the rhyme,
Staccato time,
While a lad before her stands,
Waiting tap of dimpled hands
To know his doom, to go, or stay
"Out" or "in" the pretty play!

Maiden mine with sunny hair,
Eyes that sparkle, lips that dare,
Say the rhyme
To lovers' time,
To the swain, who waiting stands,
Hoping he may clasp your hands;—
"Rimmer-zimmer-sweet-and-true,
You-stay-in-for-I-love-you!"

LITTLE TENDER HEART

Little Tender Heart is quite a man:
  High white choker, gay cravat,
Meeting me upon the street,
  Gracefully he doffs his hat.
Hair well plastered, gloves au fait,
  Clothing rather spic and span,
Yet I turn and walk away,
  Grieving for my little man!

Little Tender Heart and I have grown
  Into love that binds us so,
Scarcely can I bear to see
  Boyhood into manhood grow;
Fearing all the tender faith
  Binding him in trust to me
Will in manhood be a wraith
  Mocking joys of memory.

Little Tender Heart may wander far—
  Far from dreams of guileless truth,
Far to realms where sin may bar
  All but memories of youth;
Should the sins of manhood stain
  Purity of act, or creed,
Could I bear the dagger's pain
  Making every heart throb bleed?

BIRCH LEAVES

Little Tender Heart, for love of you
  I would bid the years be still,
Keeping you forever true,
  Far away from paths of ill;
But the test of manhood lies,
  Bravely fighting sin and wrong,
May the truth in your sweet eyes
  Always keep you brave and strong!

DOLLY BOOTS

Dolly Boots is fair to see,
Ah, how fair she is to me!
Every dimple is a kiss
Left by Cupid, hit or miss,
Cheek or chin, or chubby arm,
Dimples could'nt Dolly harm.

Dolly Boots has sunny hair,
Floating on the amorous air;
Eyes that twinkle like a dance
Of elfin feet in every glance,
Lips that smile in high distain
When her favor I would gain!

Dolly Boots has dainty feet,
Clad in red morroco sweet,
And she tippytoes and flirts,
Fluff of lace on snowy skirts,
While the way she whirls and bows
Banishes ascetic vows!

Dolly Boots has such a smile,
Tender, touching, free from guile,
When she wills it; but, you see,
Seldom has she smiles for me;
Oftener she sends a frown
Dancing from her eyes of brown!

BIRCH LEAVES

Dolly Boots, a sad coquette
I sometimes fear she is, and yet
When I bow my head and cry,
Dimpled hands will softly try
To lift it up and leave a kiss
Curative of balm of bliss!

Dolly Boots is warm of heart,
Skilled in love's entrancing art;
Smiles and frowns in equal play,
Chase each other all the day;
But when night creeps on apace,
Smiles alone light Dolly's face.

Dolly Boots is tired, you see,
Far too tired to torture me;
Generous of all her charms
Close she creeps within my arms,
While she sets my heart awhirl
Softly lisping, "I'se your dirl."

THREE HEADS OF TOW

My days are long and late with toil,
  My hands as hard as horn,
And poverty the haunting shade
  That laughs my hope to scorn.
But still I smile with holy joy
  At love, who holds the cable
That binds to me three heads of tow
  Above my frugal table.

When morning greets the silver dawn
  With lancet gleams of gold,
I lift my heart in thankful praise
  For all my cup doth hold,
For there across the snowy cloth,
  With love serene and stable,
I smile upon three heads of tow
  Above the breakfast table.

When noontide flings her sultry heat
  O'er all the country side,
And wearily I seek my home—
  What pleasures there abide;
For just above the snowy cloth
  Like Argus' eyes in fable,
Three pairs of eyes look baby wise
  Above the dinner table!

BIRCH LEAVES

When evening calls her shadows home,
  And tucks them safe in bed,
Beneath the starry coverlet
  That Mother Night doth spread,
I likewise gather in the brood
  Beneath my humble gable,
And smile to see three heads of tow
  Above the supper table.

Oh, ye who search for happiness
  In money, power and pride,
You little know the joys that wait
  Where little children bide
For all the paltry gains of earth
  Must wear a pinchbeck label
Beside the gold in heads of tow
  Above my breakfast table!

TRIOLETS TO MILDRED

When I beg for a kiss,
  Like a beggar, indeed,
And long for the bliss,
When I beg for a kiss
That she never would miss,
  Ah! too vainly I plead
When I beg for a kiss
  Like a beggar indeed!

Like a mendicant friar,
  When I bow at the shrine
With a wealth of desire,
Like a mendicant friar,
I beg, and ne'er tire
  For the kiss that is mine;
Like a mendicant friar
  When I bow at the shrine!

When I turn from the shrine
  With the tears in my eyes,
There is some thing divine
When I turn from the shrine;
For her kiss it is mine
  In a glow of surprise,
When I turn from the shrine
  With the tears in my eyes!

MISS FLYAWAY FUDGE

Miss Flyaway Fudge peeks in at the door
  Heigho! for eyes that are bright;
Her lithe, little legs flit over the floor—
  Heigho; she's off in a fright;
    With a hop, and a prance,
    And a flyaway dance,
In a fluff of white skirts, hip, skip
    In her Irish-gray eyes,
    A saucy surprise,
And the reddest of rose on her lip.

Miss Flyaway Fudge has a head of soft curls.
  Heigho! for the golden brown
In the chestnut locks as she daintily whirls,—
  Heigho! for the mimic frown,
    And the pert little word,
    Like the peck of a bird,
And the mischievous look that dares
    You out of your place,
    In bewildering chase,
'Till caught in her well-laid snares.

Miss Flyaway Fudge has a pair of white hands
  Heigho! for the dimples there;
Unless you are pleased to regard her demands,—
  Heigho 'tis best to beware—
    And yet I defy
    One glance of her eye,
Not to leave you the humblest of slaves;
    Her smile is so bright
    You love her despite
The very worst way she behaves.

by BIRCH ARNOLD

Miss Flyaway Fudge has a laugh that is gay,
  Heigho! how merry it rings;
'Tis the airiest note in the scale of the day,
  Heigho! for its silvery strings;
    It bubbles and trills
    In rhythmical rills,
Like a brook that is dashing along,
    And watching her smile
    You forget for the while
That anything ever goes wrong.

Miss Flyaway Fudge has a warm little heart,
  Heigho! but isn't she sweet,
When twilight and daylight lingering part?
  Heigho! for the tired little feet,
    As with tenderest care,
    She climbs to my chair,
And whispers demurely to me,
    "I 'uves oo a heap,
    Now wock me to s'eep,
An' I will be dood as tan be."

THE LITTLE FACE AGAINST THE PANE

What though life is full of trouble,
In its strife for daily bread,
And oft we say in bitter murmurs:
Happy only are the dead.
Yet I find in life a pleasure
Naught can ever render vain,
While I see each night and morning
A little face against the pane!

When I say "Goodbye" at morning,
When I cry "Hello" at night,
First and last upon my vision
Lingers long the lovely sight;
Baby hands, so sweet and dimpled
Throwing kisses, I retain
In my heart, beside the pictured
Little face against the pane!

Oft I hear her calling "Papa"
Half way down the block may be,
While her loving accents linger
In my ears to comfort me.
All the day of toil and trouble,
Helping heart, and hope sustain,
Simply with the joy of loving
The little face against the pane!

by BIRCH ARNOLD

Ah, no cup of earth can equal
  For its purity, and bliss,
The nectared wine that thrills my being
  In my baby's tender kiss:
Which, like dew upon the roses,
  All day on my lips has lain,
And at night I know there's waiting
  A little face against the pane!

MY OWN FIRESIDE

You may talk about the progress
  The world has made of late
In every path of science,
  From little up to great,
And boast of lights electric,
  And houses warmed by steam,
I'll discount all your grandeur
  In my firelight's cozy gleam,
As it dances and it glances,
  In a human sort of glee,
O'er the faces and the places
  Of the fireside dear to me.

'Tis humble, I'll acknowledge,
  Old fashioned, out of date,
Not anything within it
  Can boast of pomp or state;
And if you judge a mortal
  By elegance or gold
Pass on—my little fireside
  No charms for you can hold,
For it glimmers and it shimmers
  On faces proud to see
The light'ning and the bright'ning
  Of the fireside dear to me!

Outside 'tis cold and stormy,
  The wind is in a roar.
We laugh, and pile the fuel
  On flames that cry for more,
And gather 'round the ingle,
  Our feet upon the grate

by BIRCH ARNOLD

To enjoy the homely blessings
  That on our footsteps wait;
While the fire is creeping higher
  For joys that seem to be
Always gleaming in the beaming
  Of the fireside dear to me!

O earth so sad and lonely!
  O men, who toil and reap;
O wretched want and hunger!
  O avarice's guarded heap!
Where'er your pathways border
  I would that you could know
The simple joys that greet me
  Within my firelight's glow;
For its glancing and its dancing
  Are wide as wide can be,
'Tis measure of life's pleasure—
  This fireside dear to me!

ARE THE BOYS ALL IN?

When the twilight shadows gather
  Up and down the dusky street,
And the city's noise of traffic,
  With the tramp of passing feet,
Slowly dies to just a murmur
  Of its former clang and din,
Memory hears my mother asking,
  "Are the boys all in?"

When the lights begin to glimmer
  Like a thousand pairs of eyes,
Searching out the ways of darkness
  Of the worm that never dies,
And almost on every corner
  Are its agencies of sin,
Oft' I think I hear her asking,
  "Are the boys all in?"

Far from home and all its pleasures
  Tired feet have sadly strayed;
Graves of love, and graves of plenty,
  Sexton Time has grimly made;
But the tender tones of mother
  Oft my recollection win,
As I hear her softly asking
  "Are the boys all in?"

by BIRCH ARNOLD

Long ago, God found in Heaven
  Need for still a brighter star,
And across the sea of ether
  Called my mother from afar;
But her light for me is shining
  Yet across the ways of sin;
Some day I shall hear her asking,
  "Are the boys all in?"

"KEEPING COMPANY" WITH SUE

Out there in the summer twilight
  In the hush of the golden eve,
They, in their youth and beauty
  Their rosy fancies weave;
And life turns back in transport
  To youth's enchanted view
When I, like the lad out yonder,
  "Kept company" with Sue.

They look on the sunset burning
  A path for the feet of night,
With eyes that are half unseeing,
  Because of the inner sight,
That wakes alone in the morning,
  In visions fond, and new,
While I, from the path of sunset
  "Kept company" with Sue.

There's frost on my head, and teardrops
  Run down my furrowed cheek,
As I strain my ears to listen
  To catch the words they speak;
For they seem to bring me nearer
  To joy that once I knew
When youth, and I together
  "Kept company" with Sue.

by BIRCH ARNOLD

I wonder if they're feeling,
  These days that seem so strange,
The same old steadfast passion
  That ne'er knew doubt or change;
And held us one, forever,
  In bondage firm and true,
When I, a callow stripling
  "Kept company" with Sue.

Oh the old, old days of beauty.
  I thrill at thought of them;
For life is a broken blossom
  Hung to a broken stem;
And out of the past, the pleasures
  I hold are very few,
While with the youth and maiden,
  I "keep company" with Sue.

THE KIND OF GIRL FOR ME

The kind of a girl for me
  Is the girl with a tender tone,
That rings beneath her spoken words
  A music all its own;
She may be rich, and handsome,
  She may be plain, and poor,
But this gentle tone is beauty's own
  And will through life endure.

The kind of a girl for me
  Is the one with willing hand,
Who always makes the brightest link
  In every household band;
She may be wise, and learned,
  Untaught of books may be,
But the willing hand is the jeweled band
  That decks the girl for me.

The kind of a girl for me
  Is the one with the loving heart;
Who sees where sorrow presses hard
  And tries to heal the smart;
She may in manners shine,
  In polish lack, may be;
But the loving heart, when tear drops start
  Will dower her well for me!

IN APPLE-PICKING TIME

I never see an August sun,
  And mellow haze along the plain,
And hear the crickets' lonesome chirp,
  And watch the brassy skies for rain;
But out of all the long-gone past,
  My youth comes back in joyful prime
When days like these foretold the wealth
  Of autumn's apple-picking time!

The streamlet's lazy tinkle o'er
  Its pebbly bed, now but rill;
The thistle downs that idly float
  And wander at the zephyr's will;
The silent birds among the trees,
  The distant cow-bells tinkling rhyme,
Are 'round me as I live again
  In autumn's apple-picking time!

Again I walk with beating heart
  The fragrant apple scented aisles,
Where underneath the spreading boughs
  Sweet Jenny stands with dimpling smiles;
Her apron stretched to catch the spoils,
  As up the tree I quickly climb,
To match her crimson checks, and fail,
  In autumn's apple-picking time!

BIRCH LEAVES

Sweet eyes that dance and dance again,
  Sweet lips that play at hide and seek
With fleeting dimples, as I gaze
  'Till courage falters, faint and weak;
Alas! alas! with years long gone,
  Ye come from memory's sunny clime,
To mock the days that sadly breathe
  Of autumn's apple-picking time.

THE LITTLE SERVICE

Oh, 'tis just the little service
  We render day by day,
The kindly things, and thoughtful,
  The tender words we say,
That make life worth the living
  Though sorrow haunts the way.

If you've a word of pity,
  Or a handclasp soft, and true,
Or a cup of sparkling water,
  For the thirsty, give it, do;
'Twill all come back in blessings
  Again for yours and you.

Be not afraid and grudging
  The word of praise to speak;
Of the smile to soothe the weary,
  The hand to help the weak;
For they are always waiting
  Though they do not seem to seek.

Oh, 'tis just the little service,
  Along the rocky road,
The ready hand of helping
  With the over toppling load,
That makes us feel that Heaven
  Is oft' on earth bestowed!

THE LOVER'S STRATAGEM

Sweet Dorothy has won my heart,
  But I fear she doesn't know it,
And I am plagued to death to know
  Just how I'm going to show it.

Go tell her? What? Those dancing eyes
  Engage in Cupid's battle?
She'd send me flying down the rear
  With laughter's drum and rattle.

A coward? Well—but Dorothy
  Has ammunition plenty,
To kill with her bewitching smile
  Some dozen men, or twenty.

If but in Lapland's charming paths
  I wandered vainly sighing,
A club would bring my lady love
  In mute subjection lying.

But here where "liberty's" the vogue,
  With every sort of woman,
I scarcely dare to own a heart,
  Or e'en admit I'm human.

For Dorothy despises "love"
  She says I ought to know it—
Yet somehow all her tender smiles
  But seldom seem to show it.

by BIRCH ARNOLD

I'll tell you what I'll do to prove—
  Her woman's independence—
I much mistake if love and I
Are not in quick attendance,

I'll take a mouse with me tonight
  And when she's most provoking
I'll let the little rodent loose
  To do some ardent joking.

And then a scream, and Dorothy
  Is in my arms "protected,"
And I have snatched a hurried kiss,
  By protests unaffected.

And while that "horrid mouse" doth scout
  Her woman's independence,
I'll make her own she really needs
  My strong right arm's attendance.

'TWILL ALL COME RIGHT IN THE MORNING

'Twill all come right in the morning;
  There's never a night so black,
But following after the shadows,
  The sun is on its track;
And whatever there is of sorrow,
  And hatred's bitter scorning,
We have no need to borrow—
  'Twill all come right in the morning.

'Twill all come right in the morning;
  'Tis hard I know to rest
Under the lies, and malice
  By foes so oft expressed;
But keep to your humble duty,
  Nor answer hatred's scorning,
And touched with a subtile beauty,
  'Twill all come right in the morning.

'Twill all come right in the morning;
  For sorrow each must learn,
And the braver we are in bearing
  The finer the joy we earn;
And whether we win, or falter,
  Or fight with churlish scorning,
This fact we can not alter,
  'Twill all come right in the morning.

by BIRCH ARNOLD

'Twill all come right in the morning;
  For ever the truth will rise;
And ever the coward error,
  Before her coming flies;
So whatever there is of trouble,
  Or falsehood's cruel scorning,
When justice pricks the bubble,
  'Twill all come right in the morning.

MY REAL ESTATE

I've noticed that the value,
  Often placed upon a man,
Is very largely measured
  By an artificial plan
Which reckons up his acres
  And sets the seal, at once,
Of value on the broadest
  Be the owner sage, or dunce.

And often, as I ponder
  On things that mortals prize,
And seek a way to favor,
  In the world's distrustful eyes,
I'm reminded that the louder
  You boast of real estate,
The more the world is ready
  To count you good and great.

Although a modest person
  And somewhat prone to feel
The merit that's within us
  Itself will soon reveal;
And always counting boasting
  Against good taste a sin,
I'll have to swallow scruples
  If favor I would win;

by BIRCH ARNOLD

And tell my lofty neighbors
  Of the real estate I own,
The marble homes around it,
  The great ones I have known,
Who dwell within the portals
And wait to welcome me,
To take my place among them
  In days that are to be.

And when I've won the favor
  That calls me good and great,
I'll chuckle at the value
  They place on real estate;
For though it is a secret,
  I'll tell it, dear to you,
The real estate I'm vaunting
  Is only "six feet, two!"

SOME DAY WHEN I SHALL DIE

(With Apologies to Ben King)

Some day when I shall die,
And on my lifeless clay the world shall gaze,
And speak, as people do, in words of praise,
Some day when I shall die,
And say: "We always knew his native worth,
How sad he's passed so soon from earth,"
I may arise with wonder in my eyes,
And gasp in keen surprise!

Some day when I shall die,
And gathered 'round the somber funeral bier
Someone shall speak and think I do not hear,
Some day when I shall die,
And say: "So well he wrought e're life was sped,
Let justice bind the bay around his head."
I may arise, I say, and gasp:
"Give me some bread!"

THE PROOF

Once on a time two cunning rogues,
With theft their sole vocation,
Laid scheme to swear each other free
Should justice make occasion.

One stole a goose, and sorry fate,
Was quickly apprehended.
"Fear not," the other bravely said,
"By me ye'll be defended."

Next day in court he roundly swore,
In voluble confession,
That, since 'twas gosling, small and green,
The goose was his possession.

Acquitted, well the cunning rogues
Their scheming wit applauded,
And straightway of a cherished gun
A victim soon defrauded.

But justice in her watchful way
The second thief arrested.
"Now never mind," the first one said,
"This trouble's easy breasted."

To court he hied him, nothing loath,
To try his wit at swearing,
And bring upon the doubtful case
His confrere's cunning bearing.

And thus he swore, in meaning clear
As ever gleamed in crystal,
"The gun was his through all the years
Since it was first a pistol!"

MY ROSE OF PROVENCE

There's a glare of light in the opera house,
  The glitter of gems, and the odor of flowers;
And the donna's voice has a plaintive thrill
  That wakens a thought of vanished hours.

I am sitting beside my regal bride,
  Regal with beauty, and crowned with gold;
Envied of men for the prize I won,
  The power and position I seem to hold.

For I was poor, and her father's clerk;
  But the mischievous weaver of charm and spell
Threw over her eyes his filmy threads,
  And into his net drew me as well.

How the donna's voice rings out tonight
  With an undertone that stabs my heart,
'Till over the gulfs of time and place
  Remembrance leaps with eager start.

I am back once more in my sunny France,
  I have eyes for none, my Rose, but you,
And I see you smile with the old time glance
  As I solemnly swear to be always true!

BIRCH LEAVES

You will never know I keep my oath
  In a heart that is sore with keen regret;
That I starve for the light of your love lit eyes,
  And the touch of the lips I can ne'er forget.

I have sold myself, as men will sell
  Their souls to the demon of power and place;
But O, tonight I would give it all
  For just a glimpse of your perfect face!

CAPTAIN PHILIP, OF THE TEXAS

When the murderous guns of the Texas
Volleyed their thunderous fire,
And wrought on the ships of the Spaniards
Destruction appalling, and dire,
'Till they sank in the swirl of the waters
In a whirl of agonized fear,
Philip called out to his gunners,
"The poor devils are dying; don't cheer."

Then hushed were the shouts of the sailors
Victorious over the foe,
To a merciful triumph of pity
Only the bravest may know;
First on the chaplet of honor
Philip, thy name shall appear,
For the mercy and manhood that ordered,
"The poor devils are dying; don't cheer,"

Down through the ages shall echo
The words of the man and his name,
Who has given to war and its terrors
A star in the trophies of fame;
For over the thunders of battle,
Like bugle notes echoing clear,
Shall speak for America's manhood
"The poor devils are dying; don't cheer."

Awake, then awake to thy mission,
America, conqueror, brave,
Give savagery o'er to the Spaniard
And cruelty leave to the knave;
When Right shall need thy assistance,
The nations that listen may hear,
We never shall gloat o'er the fallen,
"The poor devils are dying; don't cheer."

A SONG OF THE CHURN

Under the hillside's verdured edge,
  The moss-grown milk house stands,
Cool and sweet as the crystal pledge,
  In the milkmaid's sinewy hands,
As she dips it up, with her bright tin cup,
  From the spring in the stone-paved floor,
And with Hebe's grace in her laughing face
  Refills it o'er and o'er.

I drink and drink, unsatisfied,
  My eyes above the brim;
The while I watched her graceful poise
  And figure neat and trim,
A homespun goddess beating out
  With rhythmic swing and clash,
The butter's song from the wooden churn
  In bubble, swirl and splash.

Splash! splash! splash!
  The creamy cataracts dash!
Spatters of cream have kissed
  The dimpled arm and wrist,
And I in fancy's dream
  Am envying the cream!
With thrifty housewife's heedful care
  Within the churn she looks,
And I, intent on reading there
  A lore unwrit in books,

BIRCH LEAVES

Bend low to meet, in contact sweet,
  Her head above the churn;
Her eyes and mine with meaning shine
  And faces flush and burn.
I gaze and gaze, unsatisfied,
  My eyes above the brim.
The while her fingers clean and sweet,
  The golden globules skim.
We grasp the dasher hand o'er hand,
  And beat and swing and clash
A churning song to love's refrain
  In bubble, swirl and splash!

Splash! splash! splash!
The creamy cataracts dash!
Her hand beneath my own
Has something warmer grown.
Her cheek is like the rose,
The dasher slower grows.

Thump! thump! thump!
The butter's golden lump,
A yellow island kist
By milky seas of mist,
Proclaims the churning done,
And hands that clasp as one
Unclasp and fall apart
With overconscious start.

O golden age, and golden days!
  And golden butter churned
By the rosy lass, whose tender ways
  Have taught me all I learned
Of love that lies in woman's eyes

by BIRCH ARNOLD

I pledge in memory's wine,
For still beside the autumn's tide
Her hand is clasping mine.
I gaze and gaze, unsatisfied,
The horizon's growing dim,
But still her fingers sweet and clean
My golden moments skim.
We grasp the dasher as of old
In rhythmic swing and clash,
And beat the butter's olden song
In bubble, swirl and splash!

Splash! splash! splash!
The creamy cataracts dash
On autumn's radiant day
Just as they did in May!

Thump! thump! thump!
The butter's golden lump,
A yellow island kist
By milky seas of mist,
Proclaims the churning done,
And hands that clasp as one
Shall never fall apart

THE BLUE MIST ON THE HILLS

The blue mist on the hills today
  Is autumn's tinted veil,
To hide her blushes as she greets
  Sweet summer growing pale;
And hears the plover's lonesome cry,
  And whistling pipe of quail.

The blue mist on the hills today
  Against the shimmering sky,
Picks out the meadows gold and green,
  And waters dimpling by;
To make a jeweled coronet,
  To flash before the eye.

The blue mist on the hills today
  Folds softly o'er the land.
Against it lift the fronded tops
  Of forest giants grand;
While 'round their feet the golden grain
  Encircles like a band.

The blue mist on the hills today
  Foretells the tinted hour,
When summer lingering by the way,
  Must lose each bud and flower.
To find them bloom again at touch
  Of the frost-king's wondrous power!

THE ANGEL OF MY HEART

When the twilight gathers lonely, and I sit within the gloom,
As the flickering firelight chases the shadows 'round the room,
There often comes to meet me from the land where fancies start,
A sweet and blessed presence—the angel of my heart.

She comes and sits beside me, and I clasp her hand in mine.
My pulses thrill and tremble with a love that seems divine,
As I clasp her close and hold her 'till the world slips out of sight,
And hand in hand together we walk the realms of light.

Whatever is the fairest in this poor heart of mine—
As bees extract the honey from the roses' garnered wine,—
She draws with gentle glances that lead me like a prayer,
To follow in her footsteps the pathway of the air.

Wherever crime is rampart, wherever pain and woe,
Lift up the heads of suffering with look that all men know,
She bids me bend to soothe them, she bids me wipe their tears,
And gather up the remnants of the ravelled web of years,
To weave them in a garment that is wholesome, fair and pure,
With the strength there is in hoping and the courage to endure.

And oft' when most I need her, when my path seems overgrown
With follies and temptations my wayward life has known,

And I long with ceaseless longing for joys that once were mine,
Oh then in gentle pity I can feel her glances shine
Upon my bended spirit, and I rise refreshed to say,
I will be strong and faithful howe're so dark the way.

Oh rare and radiant angel I know thou'rt but a dream!
And yet, so real and potent thy ministrations seem,
That when across the river with Charon I shall go,
I shall look to see thee stand against the morning's glow,
And there the first to greet me, the first to take my hand,
And lead me through the pastures of that sweet and peaceful land,
With a blissful sense of rapture that we never more need part,
I shall clasp thee close forever, thou angel of my heart!

MORNING GLORIES

When the bright October mornings
  Bring the cool and frosty air,
Then it is the morning glories,
  Newer beauty seem to wear!

Dew and sunshine, moon and zephyr,
  Mixed by chemistry unseen,
Fill each leaf with dye abounding
  In a richer, darker green!

Deeper grows each tint, and fuller
  Wider grows each fragile cup,
Lifted skyward, for the nectar
  Every petal drinketh up!

Until noontide, often sunset,
  Sway the blossoms, full and fair,
Do they whisper, souls grow richer
  Like themselves in autumn air!

BLOWING BUBBLES

We were blowing bubbles, Sally and I
From the self-same pipe of clay;
And we watched them sail in their airy flight
And named them on their way.

There was one for gold, and one for fame,
And one for love, and truth.
And each as it left the empty bowl
Was a symbol of life, and youth.

Which lingered longest in upper air,
The fate of each would be;
There were plenty to sail with gold and fame
But none with love for me.

My face grew dark, as I sadly said,
" 'Tis plain, unloved I go;"
But she softly whispered, with downcast head,
"They're only bubbles, you know!"

INDIAN SUMMER

Oh the lazy, hazy summer,
  In blush of Indian red,
Song of thrush in the meadow,
  Glimmer of blue o'erhead;
Rustle of leaf, and whisper
  Of winds in the mottled trees—
Was ever a year's old beauty
  Richer than days like these?

Oh the yellow, mellow summer,
  Warm as a baby's kiss,
Thrilling and filling the being
  With nature's nectared bliss,
And the skill of the frost at even
  Plying his wondrous spell—
Was ever an artist living
  Who painted a robe as well?

Oh the dancing, glancing summer,
  Queen of the autumn time,
With life like a bit of music
  Set to a ringing rhyme:
Calling of quail, and falling
  Of nuts in a ripened shower,
Was ever a chorus sweeter
  Or chanted with fuller power?

THE HAND UPON THE SHOULDER

'Tis the hand upon the shoulder
That counts when you are down;
'Tis the eyes that beam with kindness
Despite misfortune's frown;
'Tis the hand upon the shoulder,
And the hearty word of cheer,
That give you strength to conquer
The fiends of doubt and fear!

'Tis the hand upon the shoulder
When you're feeling sad and weak,
And the world is dead against you
And life seems bare and bleak;
'Tis the hand upon the shoulder,
That warms your fainting heart;
And makes the tears of blessing
From smarting eyeballs start!

'Tis the hand upon the shoulder,
When your foes look coldly on
While you sadly cover over
The graves of friendships gone;
'Tis the hand upon the shoulder,
When you stand bereft and lone
That sets your pulses throbbing
With a music all their own!

by BIRCH ARNOLD

'Tis the hand upon the shoulder,
When everything seems lost,
And you realize the manhood
Despair had nearly cost;
'Tis the hand upon the shoulder,
That makes you feel again
The tingling wine of courage
Renew your faith in men!

'Tis the hand upon the shoulder.
Thank God! that it is there
Sometimes to lift the fallen,
From the quagmires of despair.
'Tis the hand upon the shoulder,
That storms the rugged hight
With the re-embattled soldiers
Who had faltered in the fight!

WHEN THE COWS GO TRAILING HOMEWARD

Oh, the tinkle, tinkle, tinkle,
  In the bosky deeps of wood,
When the buoyant summer dances
  In her radiant womanhood.
And the cows go trailing homeward
  To the music of a bell
On the neck of dainty Daisy
  Slowly treading down the dell!

Tinkle, tinkle, tinkle, tink—
Now the cows have stopped to drink,
Tinkle, tinkle, tinkle, tank—
Through the marshy meadows dank,
Up the hillside, down the lane,
Daisy's leading all the train.

Oh, the tinkle, tinkle, tinkle,
  How it calls my childhood back,
When across the fragrant meadows,
  Through the woodland's beaten track,
Oft I drove them trailing homeward
  To the music of a bell,
Beating out the treble octaves
  Held in music's rhythmic swell!

by BIRCH ARNOLD

Tinkle, tinkle, tinkle, tink—
On the river's pebbly brink,
Tinkle, tinkle, tinkle, tank—
Up the shelving willow bank,
Through the meadow, down the lane,
Memory drives the halting train.

Oh, the tinkle, tinkle, tinkle,
  Lingering, loitering by the gate,
Wondering oft with many blushes
  Whether someone will be late,
While the cows go trailing homeward
  To the music of a bell.
Softly singing tender fancies
  Someone never dared to tell!

Tinkle, tinkle, tinkle, tink—
Hope and love are on the brink,
Tinkle, tinkle, tinkle, tank—
Honest eyes so clear and frank,
Through the meadow, down the lane,
Someone drives the scattered train.

Oh, the tinkle, tinkle, tinkle,
  Life is long and youth is past,
Could but joy and love forever
  All its sorrow still outlast,
When the cows go trailing homeward
  To the music of a bell,
I would deem its rhythmic octaves
  Keyed above a Patti's spell!

BIRCH LEAVES

Tinkle, tinkle, tinkle, tink—
Memory trembles on the brink,
Tinkle, tinkle, tinkle, tank—
Shadows wait across the bank,
Through the meadow, down the lane,
I no more shall drive the train!

MOTHER'S CIDER APPLE SAUCE

When October's winds are sighing
  In among the blushing leaves,
And mournfully the crows are cawing
  'Round about the gathered sheaves,
Purple mists are on the hilltops,
  And milkweed shakes her silky floss,
'Tis then my thoughts go roaming backward
  To mother's cider apple sauce!

Once again I hear the partridge
  Drum across the orchard rows,
Where beneath their stately splendor
  Many a red'ning apple shows!
Once again I watch the sunlight
  Quiver, gleam and glance across
The bubbling pot that I am stirring
  Of mother's cider apple sauce!

Years have vanished long and many.
  Time has woven light and shade
As a web around the pictures
  Memory has deftly made;
But the one I fondly cherish,
  Still redeemed from blight or loss,
Is the fun we had in making
  Mother's cider apple sauce!

BIRCH LEAVES

How we gathered, peeled and quartered
"Greenings," "Spitzenbergs" and "Spies!"
How we watched the cider bubble
When the flames began to rise
'Round the shining copper kettle—
'Neath the rod that swung across
Between the straight and stalwart "exes"—
Full of mother's apple sauce!

Ah! how red and sweet and mellow
Grew the apples in the stream
Of boiling juice that slowly filtered
Through the autumn's amber gleam,
While we watched the wooden ladel,
Like an earthquake, rive and toss
In crimson heaps of honeyed sweetness
Mother's cider apple sauce!

When the sun, a ball of crimson,
Slowly sank beyond the west,
And frosty airs across the meadows
Touched the appetite with zest,
'Round the supper table gathered
Boys and girls pronounced it "boss!"
And smiled at mother's rosy blushes
When we praised her apple sauce!

Scattered now and widely sundered
Each and all; the homestead sold.
Mother sleeps upon the hillside
Crowned today with autumn's gold.
But when over field and fallow
Golden-rod and aster toss,
Oft I dream of boyhood's pleasures,
When we made the apple sauce!

BEHIND HER FAN

Behind her fan she glanced at me;
In her sweet eyes I could but see
A truth, I scarcely dared to guess
Might some day come my life to bless
And make it all it fain would be!

That tender glance can never flee
The lovelit halls of memory;
So much, so much it dared confess
Behind her fan.

Though others bend the supple knee
Before her fan, all pleadingly,
Whate'er their charms of face, or dress,
They find their prayers but emptiness,
Because she smiled so tenderly,
Behind her fan!

CAN DOLLY DANCE?

Can Dolly dance? Can zephyrs blow
The trembling leaflets to and fro?
  Can velvet roses, crimson drest
  Their languorous sweetness on the breast
Distill against their bed of snow?

Can lapping waves in numbers flow?
  Your question must be half a jest—
Can fireflies dart and gleam and glow?
    Can Dolly dance?

Could you but watch the mimic show,
That Dolly doth, on me bestow,
  And see her graceful steps attest
  That beauty ceases here her quest
You would not need to ask I know,
    Can Dolly dance?

"THANK YOU," SHE SAYS

"Thank you," she says with modest air,
And blushing face divinely fair,
  The while my eyes intently trace
  Within her smile the tender grace
Of deeper meaning hidden there.

I know, I feel, yet I despair
And wonder, vaguely, if I dare
Imprint a kiss upon her face
Who "Thank you" says!

Ah, who would not good taste forswear
Such loveliness to win and wear?
  And venturing all in time and place
  Know Heaven's bliss for just a space,
While inwardly he breathes the prayer,
      She "Thank you" says?

IF ONLY

If only out of sunrise land
  Could come for just a space,
To scatter wealth with willing hand,
  Fair Fortune's smiling face;
How happy, happy I would be,
O scowling visaged poverty!

If only o'er the hills of dream
  Could come the siren Fame,
To lend her glow to things that seem
  And give to hope a name;
How happy, happy I would grow,
O days that now but longing know!

If only o'er the whispering sea,
  Could come my ship of state
O'er bounding waves to carry me
  To ancient lands and great
How happy, happy it would seem,
O heart, sad heart no more to dream!

If only through the ether's blue,
  Could come my love of old,
With clasping arms and smile I knew,
  I'd scorn both fame and gold,
And happy, happy I would be
O love my love with naught but thee!

THE SLEEVE

Sweet Kate and I a sleighing went
  In cold and snappy weather,
Yet what recked we of cold or storm
  So we were but together?
Like Ariel, across the snow,
  The horse was swiftly flying,
But somewhere down among the robes
  I thought sweet Kate was sighing.

"What is it Kate?" I quickly cried,
  And tucked the robes around her,
While midst a host of tender words
  My thoughts began to flounder,
"Oh, I'm so cold, I'll surely freeze,
  I can't stand it a minute."
"Then take my sleeve, 'twill keep you warm
  Because my arm is in it!"

The wind it blew a bitter blast,
  And urged me to be bolder,
The sleeve went round the slender waist
  Her head fell on my shoulder,
And though 'twas cold, Kate grew as warm
  And happy as a linnet,
With just a sleeve around her waist
  Because my arm was in it!

THE MEED OF FAME

The master was threshing his good gold grain,
("Oh, thresh me my sheaf," she cried;
"I have garnered it here in sorrow and pain.")
"Pass on; the way is wide!"

The master was swinging the heavy flail.
("Oh, beat out my bread of life;
My little ones hunger without avail.")
"Pass on; there's naught but strife!"

The master was sifting the chaff from wheat.
("Oh, look at this rounded head;
I gleaned it out of my own heart beat!")
"Pass on, pass on," he said.

The master was viewing his gathered grain.
("Oh, take my sheaf!" she cried;
"Sweet love is dead and life is vain!")
"Now enter, unsatisfied!"

Main

A BIRCH OPENING

PART THREE

PRESSED FOR MEMORY

Within the Book of Time we place
  Sometimes with smiles, sometimes with tears,
Like leaves of long ago, the thoughts
  We fain would keep in coming years.

MY FIRST GRAY HAIR

My first gray hair! A silver thread
'Mong chestnut curls it lay.
I gazed upon the mirrored head
And sadly turned away.

A sudden shadow crossed the day;
I felt benumbed and cold;
Did that false mirror mean to say
That I am growing old?

I gazed again. Ah, there it lay,
A silvery, snaky thing,
That tried to frighten youth away,
And make my hopes take wing.

What, old? And only just at school;
The alphabet unlearned,
While playing still the courtier's fool
To laurels yet unearned?

It cannot be! 'Tis only light
Among the shadows fine,
And frightened fancy fears the night
Is in that silvery line!

I still am young! My spirits leap
As blithely as of old;
Not yet does time a miser creep
Among his days of gold.

BIRCH LEAVES

Not yet have love and friendship ceased
To sing their siren strain;
Not yet ambition has released
A single clanking chain.

Not yet do dreams and visions die,
In purple-lipped despair.
Along the west the rainbows lie
In robes of ambient air.

And on her dancing feet I see
The silver sandals shine
Of Hope, who whispers still to me
In accents most divine.

Go to! thou hair of ancient gray!
I know thee not, forsooth,
And tho' I know thou'rt come to stay
To mock the dreams of youth

I'll say thou art old wisdoms' sign
That study planted there;
Or grant mayhap thou'rt just a line
That's writ by carking care.

But age! No, no, I'll vanquish thee,
And never know thy face,
Dare not, dare not to whisper me,
I'm in thy cold embrace.

TOO LATE

Of all the words that touch the heart,
With cold, relentless fear,
None bears through life so sad a part,
Or chills the listening ear,
Like these that bury unused days,
When chance refused to wait,
And man upon their coffin lays
The bitter words, "Too late!"

Youth sees the moments flitting by,
Nor heeds the mocking hand,
That beckons where they fade and die
By hope's receding strand;
And oft with finger on the latch,
That opens Heaven's gate,
Their hidden meaning fails to catch
'Till time has sighed, "Too late!"

Age moans beside the ebbing sea,
With sharpened backward glance,
The things he failed to do, and be,
When time was one with chance;
And begs in vain a day of grace
Wherein to re-create
The joy that yielded sorrow place
E're justice cried, "Too late!"

BIRCH LEAVES

Oh, hearts that ache, and ache in vain
With real, or fancied wrong,
Across the barren plains of pain
We hear the olden song,
The restless moments come and go,
The messengers of fate,
Reach out, and grasp them e'er you know
These saddest words, "Too late!"

IN DANGER

As one who sees upon a dangerous height,
Another pass along uncertain ways,
And knows the gulf where waiting death betrays
Unsteadiness of step, or faltering sight,
And longs to gain the eagle's power of flight
To cleave the air, and bid him pause, and gaze,
So I, O friend of unforgotten days
Behold thee bearing onward toward the night!
I stretch to thee my hand—a feeble hand,
But yet the spirit hath its eagle wings
To fly to thee; O canst thou understand
That love abides within its offerings?
The love that angels oft to mortals give,
Which sternly bids thee pause, and look and live!

OCTOBER DAYS

O'er mottled fields of autumn land
  The purple mist wreaths shiver,
And down through ruddy summach boughs
  The golden sunbeams quiver.

Upon the hilltop's sharpened crest,
  I watch the listless creeping
Of elfin fingers softly clothe
  Fair nature for her sleeping.

I see them turn with dainty press,
  The maples golden yellow,
And subtly leave their blood-red kiss
  On backgrounds faint and mellow.

Above the landscape cloud banks hang,
  In soft snow masses drifting,
With now and then the ether's blue
  Their opaque whiteness rifting.

The idle winds go idly by,
  Among the branches sighing,
Till wooed and won, on fickle breasts
  The fluttering leaves are lying.

Within the wood's deep silences
  The nuts are thickly falling
While faint and low, a bird's soft note
  Its wandered mate is calling.

BIRCH LEAVES

Oh, autumn days! Oh, beauteous earth!
  Oh, nature's pain-kissed sweetness!
Thy beauty waits the frost king's power,
  Ere knowing full completeness.

Then hush, oh, heart! Be still and learn!
  The fuller sense of duty
Weaves round the barren rocks of life,
  God's perfected beauty;

And ever lives this sculptured truth
  Beside earth's incompleteness—
The royal peace of love and life
Is earned through sorrow's sweetness.

A NEW LEAF

Like one who stands upon a mountain peak,
  And sees the paths his weary feet have traced,
  With deep'ning shadows swiftly overlaced,
To find some further height he yet must seek,
So I, aghast, footsore, and strangely weak,
  Behold the years in swift procession haste
  Adown the past, whose record uneffaced
Must sometime all its sin and sorrow speak.
While still the further height, my pilgrim feet,
  Must climb to gain the longed for boon of rest,
Oh Angel Year, with new born graces sweet,
  Write down upon thy leaf this fond request,
Bid strength, and patience, make the page so fair,
The past shall be forgotten in its prayer!

THE BEGGAR'S RICHES

I watch the lace-like clouds that pass
  Above the tree tops branching green;
I see the daisy-spangled grass
  O'er spread with dew's prismatic sheen.
I hear the choral chant of birds,
  The cadenced hum of eager bee,
Across the brook the lowing herds
  Their swelling tones send up to me.

The spider weaves me filmy lace,
  The sun makes opals gleam in dew,
The fragrant zephyrs kiss my face,
  From roses flushed a ruby hue.
The berry trembles on its stem
  With just as ripe a blush for me,
As if I wore a diadem,
  And boasted pomp and heraldry.

The sea, the air, the sky are mine,
  No king can claim more wide domain,
Or boast a sweeter flavored wine
  Than I in nature's cup attain.
My rags may brush his silken gown,
  For when we meet on God's estate,
The dainties offered king and clown
  Are served upon the self same plate.

OLD FRIENDS ARE BEST

"Old friends are best," he said, and sighed
As anguish clutched his heart,
When time had shown the barren way
From love and truth apart;
For well he knew the bitter words,
"Too late," that folly sings,
When creeping in the hearts of men
She poisons as she stings!

"Old friends are best," he said, "Oh time,
Unroll the scroll of yore,
And write me down the olden days
Of love's delight once more;
The grave shall hide me, e're I lose
The love that once I gave
To her, who reached the gentle hand
Too late alas, to save."

"Old friends are best," oh, sad, sad words,
When hearts are lone and sore,
And vainly long to pluck the bloom
Of days that come no more!
I list their echo in my heart
Above the bleak wind's cry
And send across the lonely years
A retrospective sigh.

by BIRCH ARNOLD

"Old friends are best," why not the new?
  Whose hands are warm and firm?
What magic lies within the old,
  To quicken friendship's germ?
I cannot tell, but this I know,
  Old friends, old friends are best,
And when the evening shadows fall,
  I long for them, and rest!

"I LOVE YOU"

Where'er I go, on land or sea,
  This thought is mine to comfort me,
Nor chance, nor loss, nor space, nor time
  Can separate your soul from mine,
And ages hence as time shall roll
  Shall only weld us soul to soul;
And though our hands shall clasp no more,
  These tender words I syllable o'er
    "I love—I love—I love you."

O years that reach the backward hand
  Across the barren desert sand,
Between my youth and this sad day,
  Bend low to hear me while I say,
No day has passed, no day will come
  That finds my aching heart grown dumb
To faith that speaks beyond all death,
  These vital words of heavenly breath,
    "I love—I love—I love you."

Amidst the shadows on my way,
  No midnight dims this one bright ray;
Above the jar and fret of life,
  Above its sordidness and strife,
This thought of you, and you alone
  Keeps tottering reason on its throne
And oft I hear midst falling tears,
  Your dear voice say, through long gone years,
    "I love—I love—I love you."

THE OLD SETTEE

Amidst the garret's rubbish hid,
As here I chance to roam,
I find the old settee that graced
My great-grandmother's home.

A long and low backed rocking chair,
With rockers short and thick,
And step in front to hold the feet,
Naught but a brittle stick.

The paint is worn, the spindles out,
The seat is hollowed thin,
And o'er its faded cushioned back
The cunning spiders spin.

With reverent awe I drag it forth
And seat myself thereon,
And ponder o'er the pageantry
Of days forever gone.

The ivory minature that hangs
Within the cabinet
Portrays a quaker matron's cap
And kerchief stiffly set.

With tender eyes of melting blue,
And face divinely fair,
And mouth where kisses loved to hide
And lie in ambush there.

BIRCH LEAVES

In fancy's glass I see her sit,
  Erect and prim and straight,
Upon this old settee that stands
  Before the fire in state.

The sanded floor, the burnished hearth,
  The glowing backlog's glare,
The andiron's gleaming heads of brass
  That speak her wifely care.

The high, ungainly mantel set,
  With plates of old Delft blue;
The branching candlesticks that stand
  Beside the vase of rue.

The kettle steaming on the hob,
  The house cat purring near
Her kniting needles' rapid dance,
  I see through many a year.

And wish this old settee could speak,
  As backward still I glance,
And tell me all I want to know
  Of grandmamma's romance!

A quaker maiden born and bred,
  In simple, quiet ways,
I know those eyes of hers reveal
  More than her garb portrays.

The snowy kerchief stiffly set
  Across her bosom's swell,
Ne'er matched the heart that oft beneath
  So wildly rose and fell.

by BIRCH ARNOLD

And I, her child, though far removed,
Lean on her old settee,
And wish her spirit, grave and wise,
Could come to comfort me.

I lean to kiss her mirrored face,
In sympathy untold,
For I, like her, a secret bear
The grave alone may hold.

Oh, grandmamma of olden days,
How close our pathways lean;
Your heart of fire relives in mine,
Though lifetimes roll between!

I charge the self-same battlefields,
I pay the self-same fee,
To pain that holds us both in leash
Upon the old settee!

Within the garret dim I sit,
While you, before the fire
Of long ago, the battle waged,
'Twixt duty and desire.

And here, while tears are falling fast,
I pray that I may be
As brave a heroine as you,
Upon the old settee!

"GRANDMA"

Oh, memory, lone memory,
  Crowd back the passing years,
And bring again the sweet, sweet face
  I only see through tears;
The silken puffs of snowy hair,
  The tender smiling face,
Whereon the firelight cast the rose
  Of youth's remembered grace.
As she knits, and knits, and falls asleep,
  And wakens with a start,
And smiles, and knits, and sleeps again,
  Her tender lips apart.

Oh, bring again the gracious days,
  That knew her presence here,
The tender thoughtfulness that cast
  O'er life its rose-hued cheer;
The love that found with busy hands
  No minute's emptiness,
But spent itself with prayerful thought
  In finding ways to bless;
Oh, let me see her knit, and knit,
  The smile upon her face,
That seemed to make the ingle nook
  A love enchanted place!

A WOMAN'S HEART

A puzzling thing is a woman's heart,
And oft, as I sit and ponder,
I set old tales and creeds at naught
In a maze of dreams and wonder.

The lesser man, she is surely not,
Whate're the old tradition;
That God created an after thought,
A second-hand edition.

"Flesh of his flesh, bone of his bone"—
Thus runs the olden story·
Yet God has fashioned her His own
And mantled her with glory.

Man is a law unto himself,
Holding the brimming measure—
Whate're the garner of love, or pelf—
The meed of well earned pleasure.

But self forgetting, woman's all
She finds in love's compassion,
And heeds the fickle vagrant's call
In strange and abject fashion.

Through pain, and scars, and blight, and loss
In endless limitation,
She bears the lily branded cross
Of Calvary's consecration!

BIRCH LEAVES

No hell of earth so dark and deep,
  Her love will not devine it;
And round a lost love fondly creep
  To shelter and entwine it!

And so I say of God a part,
  Evangel of true living,
He filled her bosom with His heart
  To spend it in forgiving!

FORGETFULNESS

If, in the viewless haunts of time,
  Some gift of fortune, treasured there
In garnered fulness, might be mine,
  In answer to entreating prayer,
I scarce could claim a boon to bless
  To equal thine—Forgetfulness!

A haunting shadow sups with me,
  To greet the morning's glad surprise,
With only sense of misery
  And bitter meaning in its eyes;
Alas! I cannot seek redress
  Except in thee—Forgetfulness!

The summer suns may rise and set,
  And blossomed fragrance fill the air,
I see thro' tears, nor can forget
  That ever hovering wraith of care;
Though sorrow makes the sunshine less,
  They're one with thee—Forgetfulness!

Each heart must know its day of grief,
  All earthly things must fade and die,
Remembrance brings perchance relief,
  Or bitterness of tear and sigh;
But me, no other boon can bless
  Alike to thee,—Forgetfulness!

" GRANDPA "

Daily I see him pass,
  Silvered the hair on his brow;
Bent with the weight of years,
  The shoulders unburdened now.
His hands behind him clasped,
  In clasp that seems to meet
A hand, whose tender touch
  He longs from the past to greet!

The smile on his lips is sweet
  With the sunset glow of years;
The look in his eyes is calm,
  Untouched by long-shed tears,
A link 'twixt heaven and earth,
  Serene he goes his way,
Giving to clouded souls
  Glimpse of a fairer day!

Often I ponder long,
  On the nook he calls his own—
Have children about his knees
  From the home nest long since flown?
Is "grandpa" the patron saint
  Of infantile joys and pains?
And counting the smiles he gives
  Whose are the richer gains?

by BIRCH ARNOLD

Oh, hair of silvered snow,
  And eyes of patient trust,
Beside thy golden years
  Our own are but as dust.
For thou hast the lesson learned,
  And thou alone canst teach,
Where the treasure of treasures lies
  For which we vainly reach!

TO A BUTTERFLY IN NOVEMBER

Oh pallid phantom of a joyous summer day
That vaguely trembles on my window pane,
Dost lift thy heavy lidded eyes in vain
To catch the westering sun's endearing ray?
Dost sigh for odorous breaths that idly play
Their sweet enchantment o'er the damask rose
Upon whose glowing breast thou might'st repose
And lull thy fears in dreams of blooming May?

Alas! Thou art the idle sport of Fate,
And winter's blast shalt rudely smite thee down.
Yet not alone dost thou find all too late
Thou might'st have worn the summer's golden crown.
Like thee I lingering watch the waning light,
As swift the shadows rise of destined night!

ALWAYS SILENCE

Dear, it is always silence.
I stretch my hand to thee,
The radiant glance of thy sweet eyes
Within my soul I see;
But if I speak thy precious name
It meets but empty air,
Dear, it is always silence,
Silence everywhere.

Dear, it is always silence.
Not thus it used to be,
When thou and I together dwelt
In soulful sympathy;
But now when shadows darkly fall,
And cold the evening air,
Dear, it is always silence,
Silence everywhere.

Dear, it is always silence,
Can thy pure spirit see
How fails my ever-longing heart
In constant need of thee?
And seeing, dear, is there no way
Between the here and there?
Dear, it is always silence,
Silence everywhere.

by BIRCH ARNOLD

Dear, is it always silence
  Beyond the silver sea?
Across the bars of heavenly space
  Can no thought come to me?
Oh, whisper down the ether's aisles
  A word that still you care;
For, dear, it is always silence,
  Silence everywhere.

THE LOST DAY

As with a pulse of passionless delight
  Tells o'er her beads some meek and saintly nun,
  So I the listless slipping one, by one
Of each calm day and star refulgent night,
But still, oh Time, tho' all thy days were bright
  As houris' dreams beneath an Orient sun,
Turn back thy loom, there is a thread undone
Thou dost not weave the pattern yet aright!

Put back thy hand to grasp a day I lost
  It lies so wan beside its sister days—
The ransom of a heart that fatal losing cost,
  And on its olden splendor let me gaze!
Oh, weaver stern! I kneel and plead in vain,
  My lost, lost day thou will not give again!

IN OLD LOVE

I went today along the path
  Where twenty years ago,
Dear love, we wandered hand in hand,
  Beneath the sunset's glow.
'Twas autumn then, 'tis autumn now,
  But spring was in our hearts,
And love and life upon our stage
  Were playing brilliant parts.

I stepped within the covered bridge,
  'Tis falling in decay,
And mosses cling along its edge
  And deck the arching way.
I stood and gazed through twenty years
  Upon that autumn time,
When eyes that thrilled with heaven's fire
  Were seeking soul in mine.

I drank again the wine of bliss
  You pressed upon my lips,
I saw as then your hand in mine,
  The world in dark eclipse.
Your smile was all the sun I asked
  To light the rose-hued way
Along which love, and you and I
  Together, walked that day.

by BIRCH ARNOLD

I knew so well your heart and mine
  Were halves of one great whole,
Wrought out in ages past to be
  A strongly welded soul,
That moves serene and steadfast through
  The trivial storms of life,
And dares with flashing eye to breast
  The battle's fiercest strife.

Alas, how weakly you and I
  Apart have borne the fray—
A straggler in the army's rear
  I wandered there today.
A lonely woman, heart and soul;
  Through all these twenty years,
Uplifting prayerful hands to plead
  For sunshine through my tears!

The pall of silence covers you—
  I know not if you care,
How full of thorns my tear-bought crown,
  How rough the cross I bear;
I know not if you sometimes feel
  The paths that led apart
Have narrower grown with hope and zeal
  And blossom less in heart.

But this I know; we missed the way
  Our feet might then have trod,
I might have led you nearer peace
  And you led nearer God;
For let the world say what it will,
  There comes a bitter day
When outraged love will have its own
  Despite cold reason's sway.

And so, dear heart, along the path
  Of twenty years ago
I wandered 'neath the bridge today
  In love's sweet afterglow,
And wondered if you ever dream
  Of that far autumn time,
When eyes that thrilled with heaven's fire
  Were seeking soul in mine.

OH HUNGERING HEART

Oh hungering heart! What soothing draught distilled
  From new made sweets can ease thy cry of pain,
  Since Fortune mocks thy prayers with cold disdain,
Nor gives again the wine of life she spilled?
The broken cup, alas! was never filled,
A joy it lacked, but are all joys in vain
Because of one that's lost? Does none remain
To keep thy plaint of passionate hungerings stilled?
Ah, yes! live o'er and o'er again, oh heart,
Thy feast of old; the rapturous glance of eyes
That answered love in thine; tho' worlds apart
Thou still canst banquet on the old replies,
Howe're so bare the future yet may be
The past shall give a sumptuous feast to thee!

YOUTH AND I

Youth and I have parted;
  Youth was gay with hope,
  I was worn with sorrow.
  Youth saw golden dreams
  In every bright tomorrow,
  I looked often back
Upon our flower strewn track,
And when we reached the crest
Of the hilltop, looking west,
  Youth and I have parted;

Youth and I have parted;
  Youth believed in love,
  I knew love was grieving
  Beautiful, and sweet,
  Changeful, and deceiving;
  Youth was eager, bold
And I—a trembling hold
Upon his restless hand—
Could only feebly stand,
  So youth and I, we parted!

Youth and I have parted:
  Youth was glad to go,
  And I am well content—
  Life is so much calmer
  Since away he went,
  All the restless yearnings,
All the old time burnings
Of feverish desires,
Have quenched their fitful fires,
  Since youth and I have parted!

BIRCH LEAVES

Youth and I have parted;
Youth is far away,
But on the westward slope,
Where glints the evening sun,
I once more welcome hope,
And faith is close beside me,
With hand outstretched to guide me,
Where shadows darkly close,
Above earth's last repose,
When life and I have parted!

COMPANIONSHIP

The hungriest hunger a mortal can feel
Is that which the depths of his being reveal;
For often it starts at a word or a breath
With a longing as keen as the poniard of death!
Deny it who will, the need to be known
By another whose need is deep as his own,
Who answers each thought, comprehends in advance
The wealth of a word the soul of a glance;
Whose presence evokes at its magic behest
What is highest within him, divinest and best,
Whose absence is loss no other can fill
The half soul seeking its other half still,
Of all the longings which life can bestow,
This is the sharpest a mortal may know!

A DREAM OF FAME

The book from out the reader's slender clasp
In silence fell upon her lap. The tale
Was old, as old as legends of the kingly Christ
The world would not receive, because, forsooth,
He came in no array of sceptered pomp;
And dimly shadowed forth the untold pain
That lurked within a Homer's peerless soul,
As, unacknowledged, still he fought his way
To those Olympian heights he owned and crowned.
Upon the page a Goldsmith's smiles and tears
Betrayed the ghastly hand of want, above
The rose red wreath he strove to twine with laugh
And song, around the early emptied cup
That held his days.

And still the visions passed,
The pale and blinded Milton lived again.
The dreary hours, that all too oft had stript
From sweet conception of an angel's mighty thought,
The bud and bloom of fancy's fragile growth,
And left the barren tree to bend beneath
The blast of adverse fortune's storms. With him
There came a goodly train of fellowship,
In Butler, Otway, Steele, and lesser lights
Innumerable; for each had felt the pangs
Of hunger gnaw, until the spirit bowed
Beneath its abject load, forgot its dreams
And sank, a wounded bird, to rise no more
To sing a dull-eared world its tuneful notes.

The maiden lived, as who has not, in awe
Of these immortal minds, who ages past
Adown the aisles of times still send the truths
A sneering world once coldly counted dross.
While musing thus—on what of fond desire
These longing ones unanswered found, or what
Of bitter dashing 'gainst the stubborn rocks
Of prejudice, and jealous hate, or what
Of fierce despair, or burning love, or pale
And ghastly beckoning of hopes that led
Adown the sad decline of life—she passed
Into the land of dreams.

Before her rose
The massive walls of Fame's imperial court
Upon a purple dais sat enthroned
Her mighty judges—rich in all her gifts
Of genius, gold, and earthly power—and there
Deliberate council held on those who sought
To dwell serenely in her royal smile.
Before them borne upon the wavering wind
The myriad voices murmuring rose and fell,
Of those who clamored at her gates, and begged
The right of entrance. Theirs by right of need
Of effort made in face of hunger, woe
And want, by right of tenderness, and grace
Of sympathy with starving multitudes.

Up rose amongst the judges then, the one
Revered by all, whose words the shining gold
Of wisdom bore, and pityingly he spake:

"Decrees of Art are changeless. Ye who hope
To win undying Fame's attendant good,
Must first untold, untaught, the secret find
Whence comes the soulful fire that burns alone

For him who reads her subtle mysteries.
Or, from the crucible of life and pain,
Evolve some hidden power whose conscious gain
Shall strike your lyres with more accustomed touch.
Ye struggling multitudes, upon the wheel
Of agony, relentless crush your hopes,
Nor seek again the temple's courts, till time
Your follies proves, or furnace tries your gold."

Abashed they turned away with tears and sighs,
And ever backward cast the yearning look—
Save one, who lingering still beside the gates
Besought with eager hand and voice, a sign
Of recognition. Crowned with youth and faith
And hope, she sang, as sing the birds of June,
For joy of life, and straightway poured her song
In sweet and simple measure on the air.

"I think in the lives of the most of us,
There are times when the commonest things
Are touched with so rhythmic a sweetness
That the heart from necessity sings.

There are days when the sun is so golden,
And the skies are so wondrously blue,
That simply to live, and be happy,
Seem strangely and thrillingly new.

And a glance of the eye, or a greeting,
A clasp of the hand, a caress,
Are fraught with a magical meaning,
'Twere vain to deny or repress.

BIRCH LEAVES

If Reason should ask me the wherefore
  Or Judgment cry, 'Foolish, unwise,'
I could answer the one or the other
  With only these humble replies—

That God in His infinite mercy.
  Our hearts—as the note of a bird.
High over the wrath of the tempest,
  Is sometimes unceasingly heard—

He shaped to sing never so dumbly,
  Above the world's working and wear.
The one little story of gladness,
  The tremolo note of His care.

If the heart can forget it is lonely,
  Or the wearying work of the day
In the musical rhythm of being,
  For a moment can vanish away.

It is needful to question and wonder
  What reason we have for our mirth;
Since for all of us shine the clear heavens
  And for all of us blossoms the earth?"

The judges heard. "Go live, and living, learn,"
They said. "Not 'till some ripeness gloss the fruit
Of immature and wandering thought, or life,
As with an artist's brush, hast vivified
Thy dreams, canst thou dare hope admission here."

Reluctantly adown the way she passed,
And joined the weary throngs beyond. To them
She spoke some simple word of cheer; for heart
And hope alike repelled regret, and sang

by BIRCH ARNOLD

Anew the siren's lay. And ever rose
Above her daily task, and voiced itself
In simple song, her love of life and earth.
Ofttimes with eager feet she sought the courts
Of Fame, and gathered reverently the words
That fell from mighty lips, and longed to learn
The secret which doth "gild the gold, and paint
The lily's grace," with earth's much prized success.
For self? Ah, no! to sing was life; but loved
And tender ones with mute caresses begged
Eluding plenty's peace. Yet oft upon
Her strained and listening ear, there fell
The stern and unrelenting, No.

At last,
When life prophetic autumn hues had gained,
With weakened steps she trod again the path
Familiar grown with frequent journeyings.
With face from which the rose had flown, and eyes
Adroop, alike to some fair saint, who tells
In patient calmness oft her missal o'er
She faltered forth her song. By hope upheld
No less; for sorrowing years too truly told
The many colored cup, wherein doth lie
The bitter sweet of ripe experience
Had but too oft unto her lips been pressed.
"I thought," she mused, "when youth was mine, to speak
A word of truth or poesy that might
Its echo wake within these courts.
I yet must seek, tho' dimly burns the flame
Of life, and hope her weary wings unfolds
But slowly at my call. And is there none
To bid the humble singer to the feast
Of fair accomplishment, who labors long
And in the autumn homeward brings her sheaves?

BIRCH LEAVES

No happier one with vision unobscured
By mists of doubt, and films of bitter tears
To beckon her to paths of answering peace?
Is this a doubtful good I seek? Ah, no!
The spirit ever longs for greater heights,
Nor knows its strength until thro' sun and storm
Its callow wings are tried. It still must sing;

"No more? O love did you hear it?
  Nor opened your lips e'en to speak?
Nor lifted the curve of your lashes,
  To flash out the glances I seek?

No more? It is idle to tell me!
  As if the sweet days we have known,
The joys we have brought to each other,
  Were passed as a wind that is blown!

No more? All the red of your roses
  Lies tranced in a beautiful sleep,
That seeketh to hold you enchanted
  Their langorous fragrance to keep!

No more? Here, love, is a blossom
  That is white as the snow of your brow;
Your waxen white fingers shall clasp it
  Its delicate grace to endow.

No more? O, sweet, I am lonely!
  Just open your lips but to speak,
And lift up the curve of your lashes
  To flash out the glances I seek!

No more? Is it I who am dreaming?
Can it be what they tell me is true?
Is it fancy that holds me enchanted,
And death has its seal upon you?"

Ah! even as she turned away, uprose
Within her breast the joy of song, Again
She heard her soul's entreating cry, Again
She felt that 'till the flickering flame had burnt
Its last of life, the solace of its fantasy
Would yet enwrap itself around her pain,
And place her winged feet above the stern
And arid plains of hunger's barren land.
But O, for those she loved the tears would flow,
And sharpened sighs her bosom rend. 'Twas hard
To win for them no guerdon of her hope; to press
No brimming cup unto their lips, and feel
The Heavenly joy that blesses him who gives.

O, strife! To young and eager hearts the thorn
That only makes alluring blossoms sweet
Enhances love's endeavor; ambition's paths
Makes doubly grand, and up the toilsome steeps
Of time, sets fond and full frutition's meed—
Ye speak a bitter word to those who feel
The strength of years ebb slowly thro' their veins;
Who only climb the roughened grade at voice
Of duty calling higher. Ye paint no bloom
Upon the mountain top to light the dark
And gruesome caves of doubt; ye only speak
The pain and weariness where else should be
The placid rest of life's accomplishment!

Yet once again, oppressed with boding fear
And all her sorrowing years like wrathful ghosts
Attendant on her thought, she sang as sings
The cygnet when it feels the slow approach
Of death, in faltering tones before the gates:

"O, Sleep, fond friend, when we're together
I find contentment's calm repose,
With thee, I dream of sunny weather,
And the far sweet land of the thornless rose.

With thee, forgotten all my sorrows,
The sinister dread and doubt and fear;
With thee no spectral, sad-eyed morrows
Upon my sunless way appear.

With thee I walk the fields Elysian,
And drink the sweetened chalice there,
With thee I see the raptured vision
Of long besought and answered prayer.

Sweet sleep! When last we lie together
Within the cold and narrow bed,
More softly than the wafted feather
Let thy last fond "Adieu" be said.

And bid me wake some tender morning
Beyond the harbor's purple bar.
Where life beholds in radiant dawning,
How clear its wondrous mazes are!

The song was ended. On the evening air
Its tender notes had scarcely died away,
When forth the order came. "Go ope the gates.
And bid the singer hence."

by BIRCH ARNOLD

The heralds sprang,
And loud the rattling bolt and chain flew back,
And slowly creaked the temple's gates ajar.
But up the step there came no eager form.
And on the threshold lying there, they saw
With pallid, peaceful face, the singer—dead!

The dreamer woke, and with a shudder cried,
O, Love! In humble ways with thee to stray,
Who art my all; whose every thought awakes
Its sweet reflection in my heart, as stars
In lesser brilliance see themselves retold
In placid lakes; whose slightest word can make
My being thrill to harmonies divine,
When on my trembling soul thy master hand
In Godlike power is laid. With thee to find
The gold of life embosomed in our love.
Our sweet content, and e'en in grief that comes
As falls the rain upon us all, Ah, this
Alone can make the desert earth to bloom,
Alone can recompense for tears; alone
Can smooth the thorny path, or satisfy
The thirsting heart with Heaven's cooling dews!

TO MY PEN

Good bye, old friend, we've been together
  Through sun and storm this many a year,
And which is dearer, tell me whether,
  The smile you gave me, or the tear?

We smiled sometimes, the world unknowing
  How much it missed in many a jest,
'Twixt you and me the laughter showing
  Made life take on an added zest.

And if sometimes our tears were blended,
  O'er justice wronged, or love laid low,
We knew before the story ended
  The sorrowing heart with hope would glow.

We pictured life in varying fashion,
  We painted beauty's roseate cheek,
We captured every master passion,
  And tried to make the captives speak.

We loved with love in fond pursuing,
  We thrilled beneath the lover's kiss,
And this perchance, was our undoing
  So loath were we a joy to miss.

The field of fact was sharpened stubble
  To cut and bruise our unused feet,
We liked to shun the paths of trouble
  And feel the pulse of pleasure beat.

But ah! with fate, the tireless master,
We drank full oft the draught of pain.
And oft o'erwelmed in fresh disaster
We sighed for peace, but sighed in vain.

We felt our souls grow tired and languish
Beneath the blast of sorrow's breath,
And prostrate lay in utter anguish
Before the frowning face of death.

And thus the scenes were ever shifting,
We lived them all, old friend and true,
But felt the shadows round us lifting
When you and I could dream and do.

We looked upon the height believing
We might attain its vernal crown,
But you and I. old friend, are grieving,
Compelled to lay that sweet hope down.

A halt is called, there's no unheeding
The hand that clasps you nerveless grows;
When shall we meet? ah! cease your pleading,
That time, alas! God only knows!